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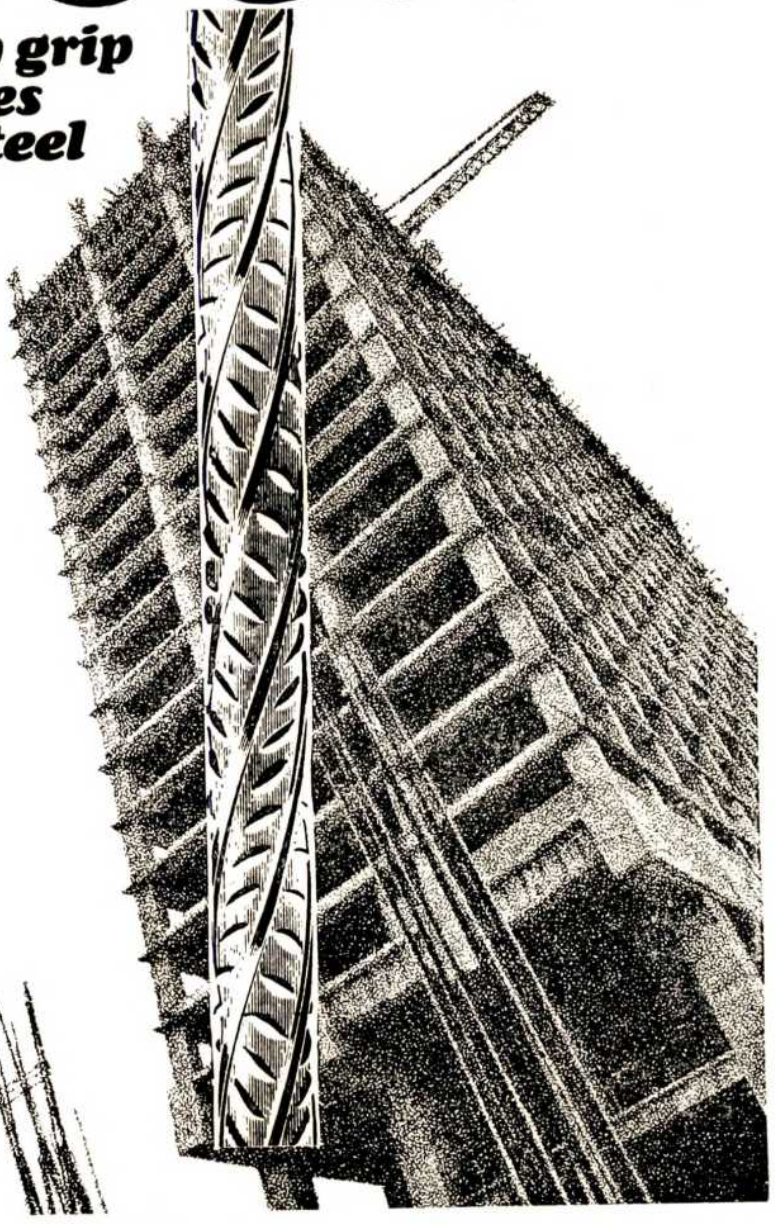

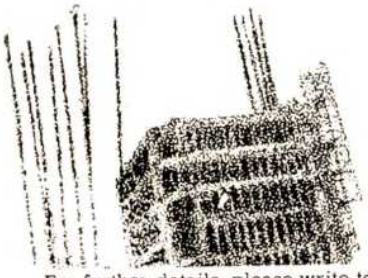

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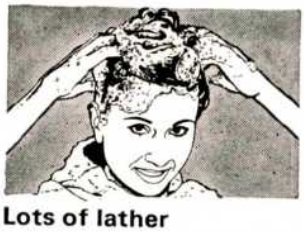

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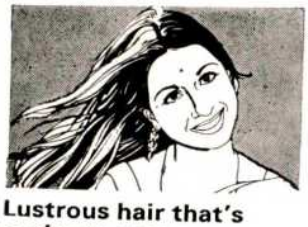

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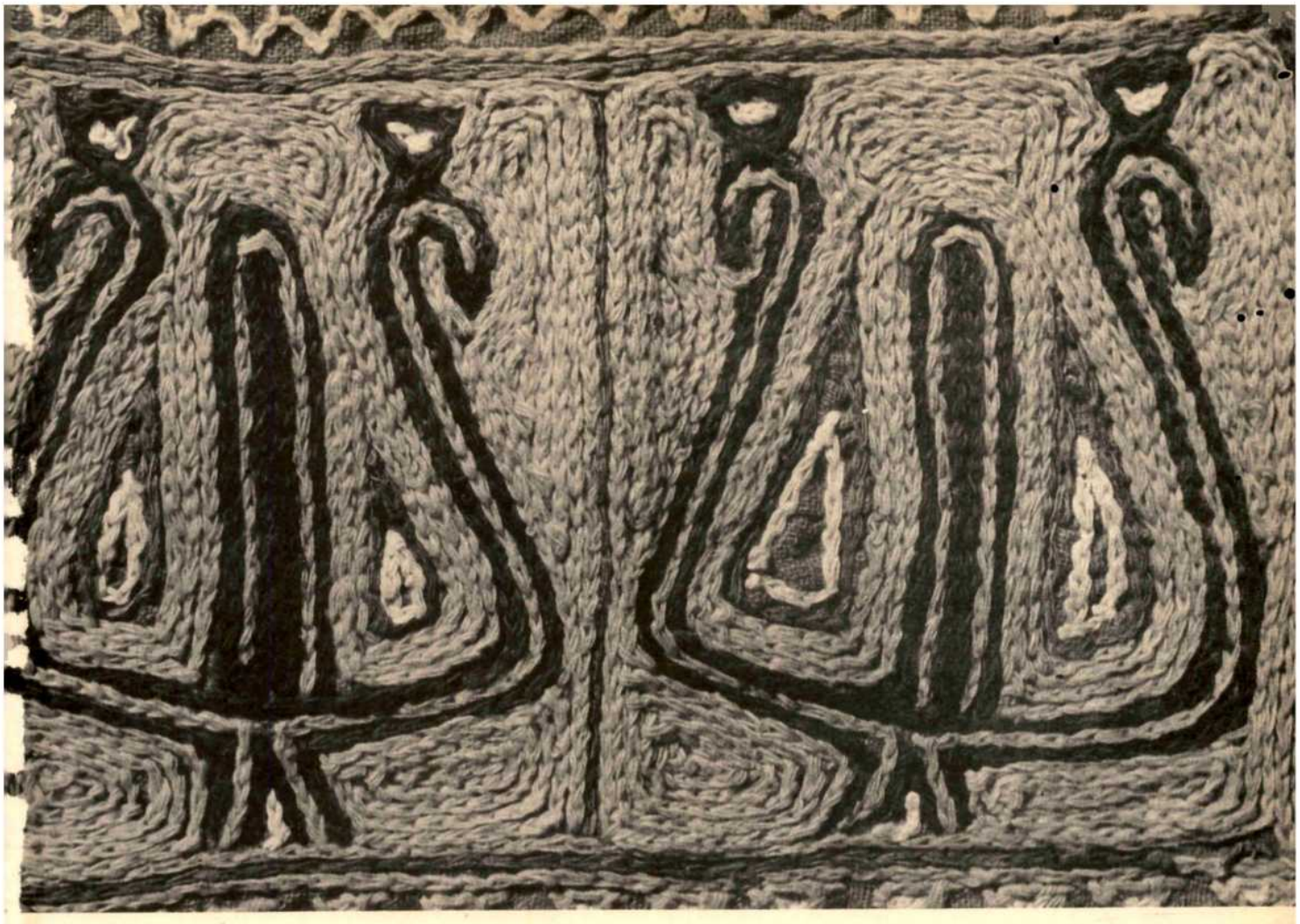

Detail of a skirt border embroidered by the nimble fingers of Haryana's traditional craftsmen who have passed on their creative talents from generation to generation.

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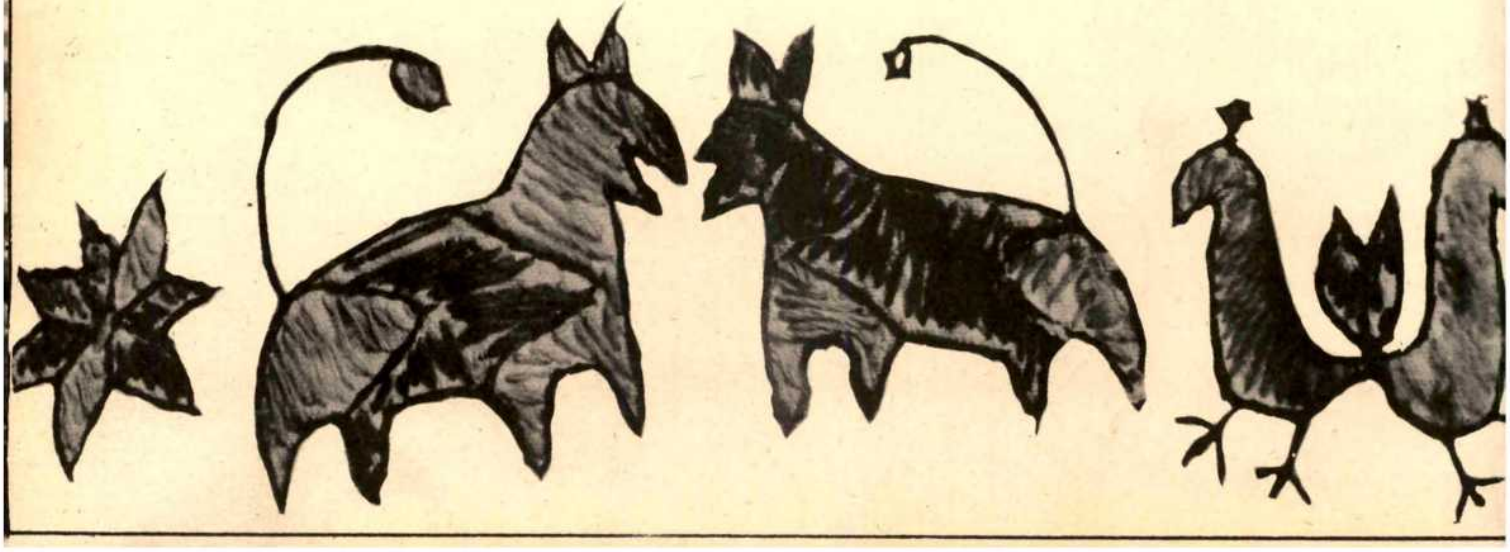

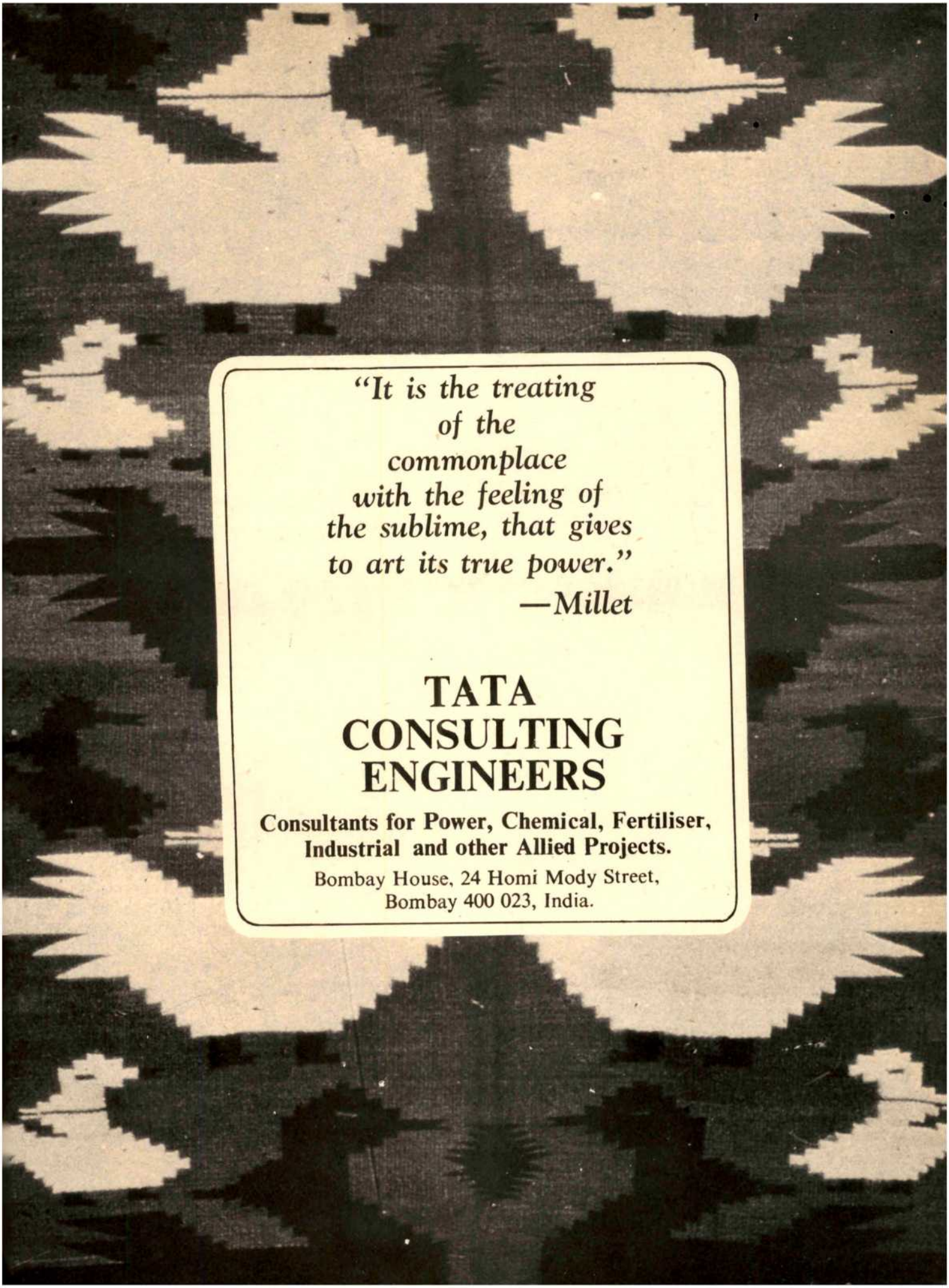
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with the feeling of
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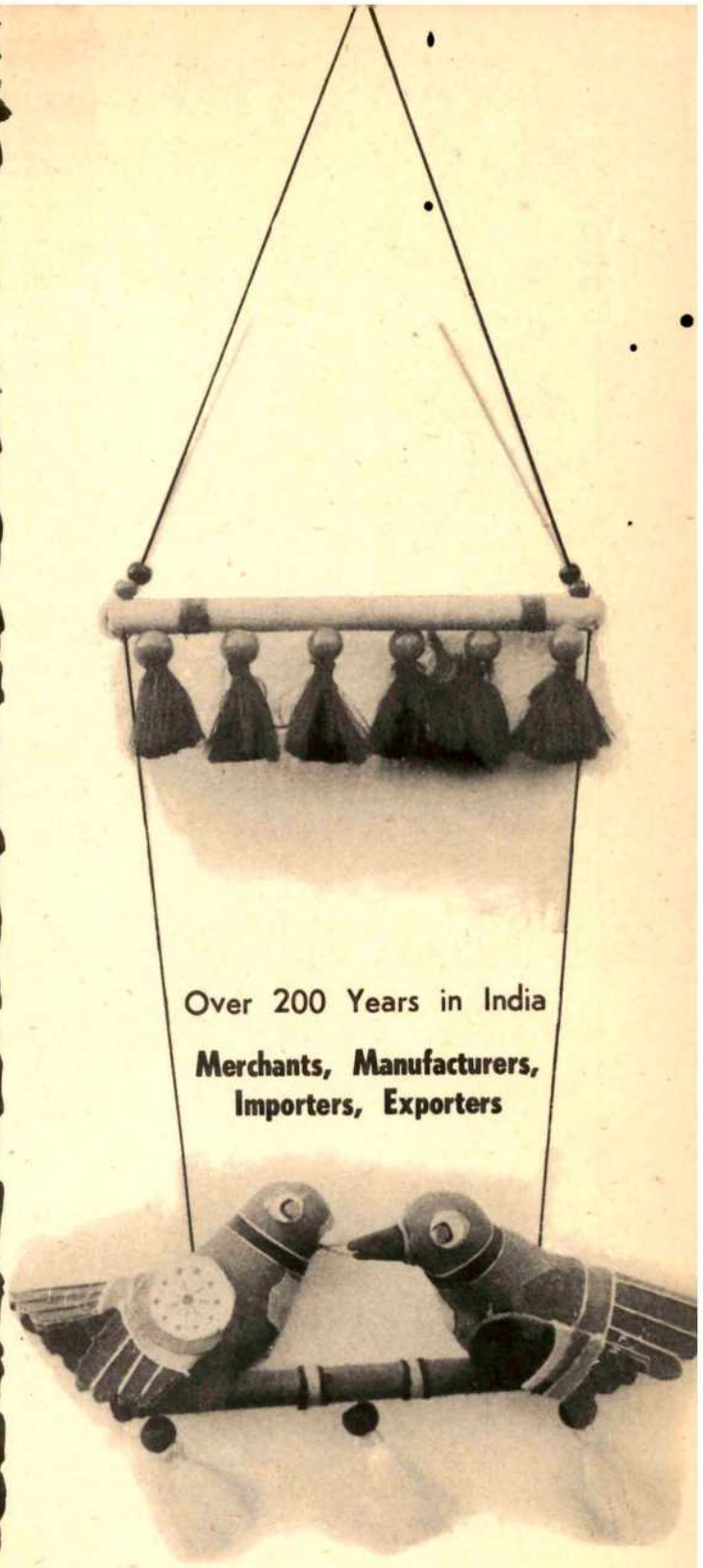

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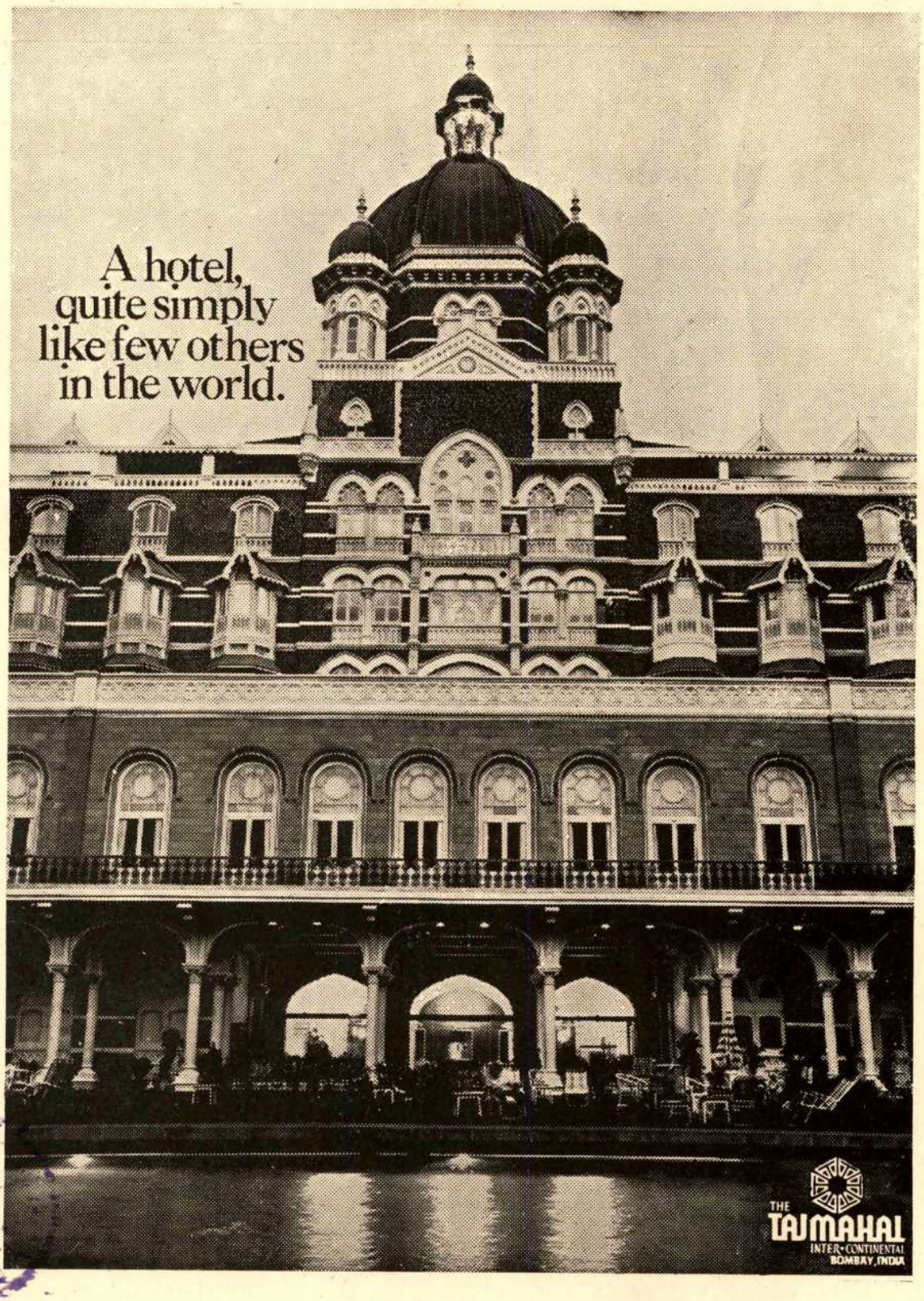
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VOLUME XXIX
NUMBER 1
DECEMBER 1975

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EDITORIAL

HARYANA CRAFTS
by Mulk Raj Anand

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7 Leather Work

COVER: A colourful mobile of paper birds, made mainly for the marriage ceremony in Haryana, echoes the chorus of birdsongs, announcing the coming of happiness.

MARG wishes to dedicate this special issue on Haryana Crafts to Shri S. K. Misra who inspired it. We hope that this modest monograph will become a manifesto for the renewal of the craft world of Haryana which was left desolate so long. The Director of Public Relations of Haryana State kindly gave facilities for tours into the villages of the interior. Also the Department of Public Relations collected a few hundred remnants of folk handiwork from which we could choose various items for reproduction.

MARG is also grateful to the Small Scale Industries Department of Haryana and Shri K. C. Sharma for the loan of photographs on pages 31, 36 and 43.

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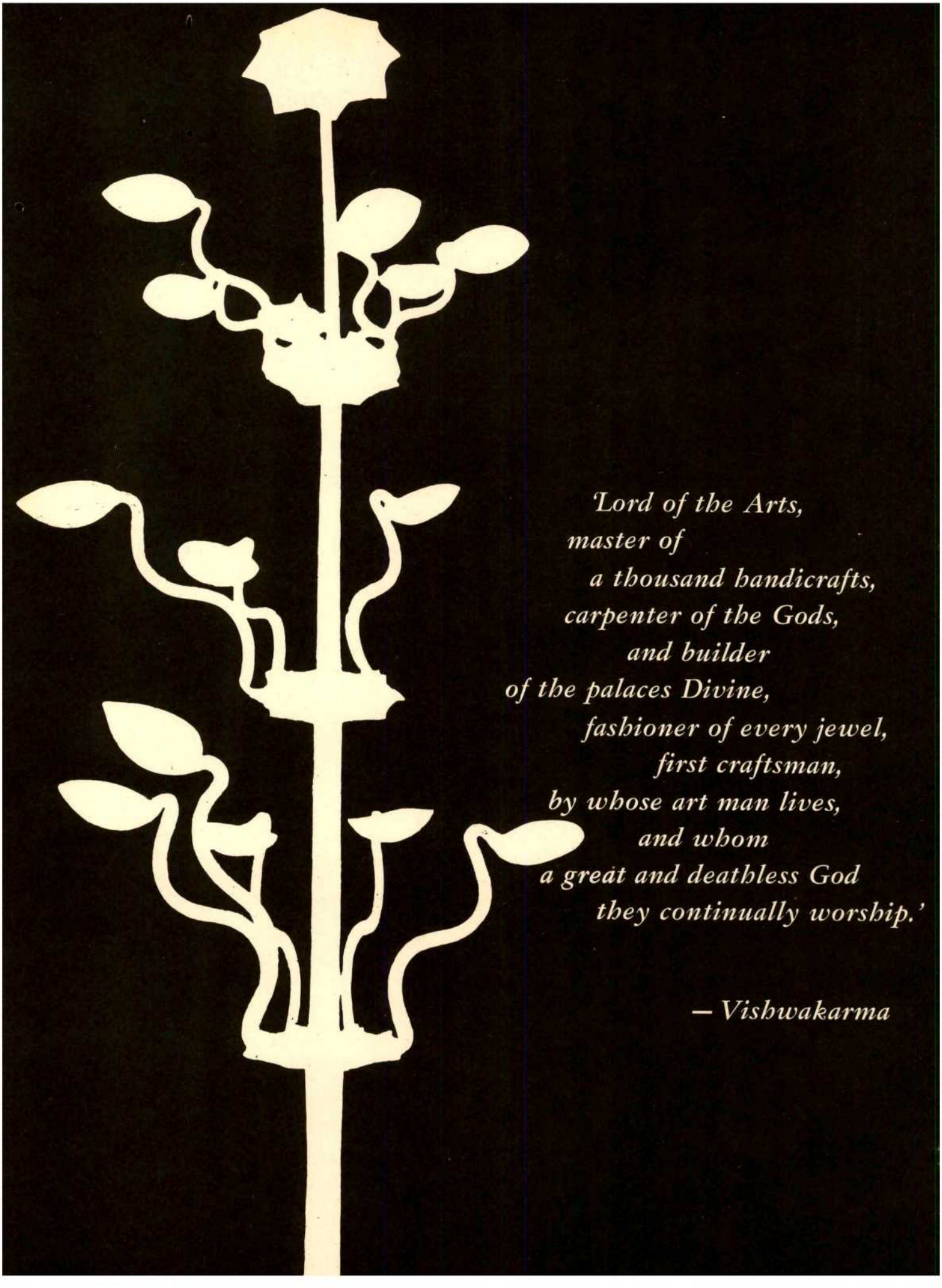


'Lord of the Arts,
master of
a thousand handicrafts,
carpenter of the Gods,
and builder
of the palaces Divine,
fashioner of every jewel,
first craftsman,
by whose art man lives,
and whom
a great and deathless God
they continually worship.'

– Vishwakarma

Haryana Crafts

One sees a potter revolving the wheel with the right hand, even as he moulds the clay with the left hand. Then, while the wheel is in quick motion, he shapes the moulded lump into a hollow cylinder. He twists it. And, craning his neck back, he looks at the vessel as an artist does when he withdraws from his easel to look at his painting in the raw. A little dissatisfied, the potter gives another push to the wheel and begins to reshape the cylinder into the volumes of a pitcher. Now the clay is shaped to a different rhythm. The pressure of the hand, which was hard, is now a subtle, soft, sinuous, gliding movement across the surface, the fingers being tender, the eyes possessed, as the vessel matures into some kind of a form.

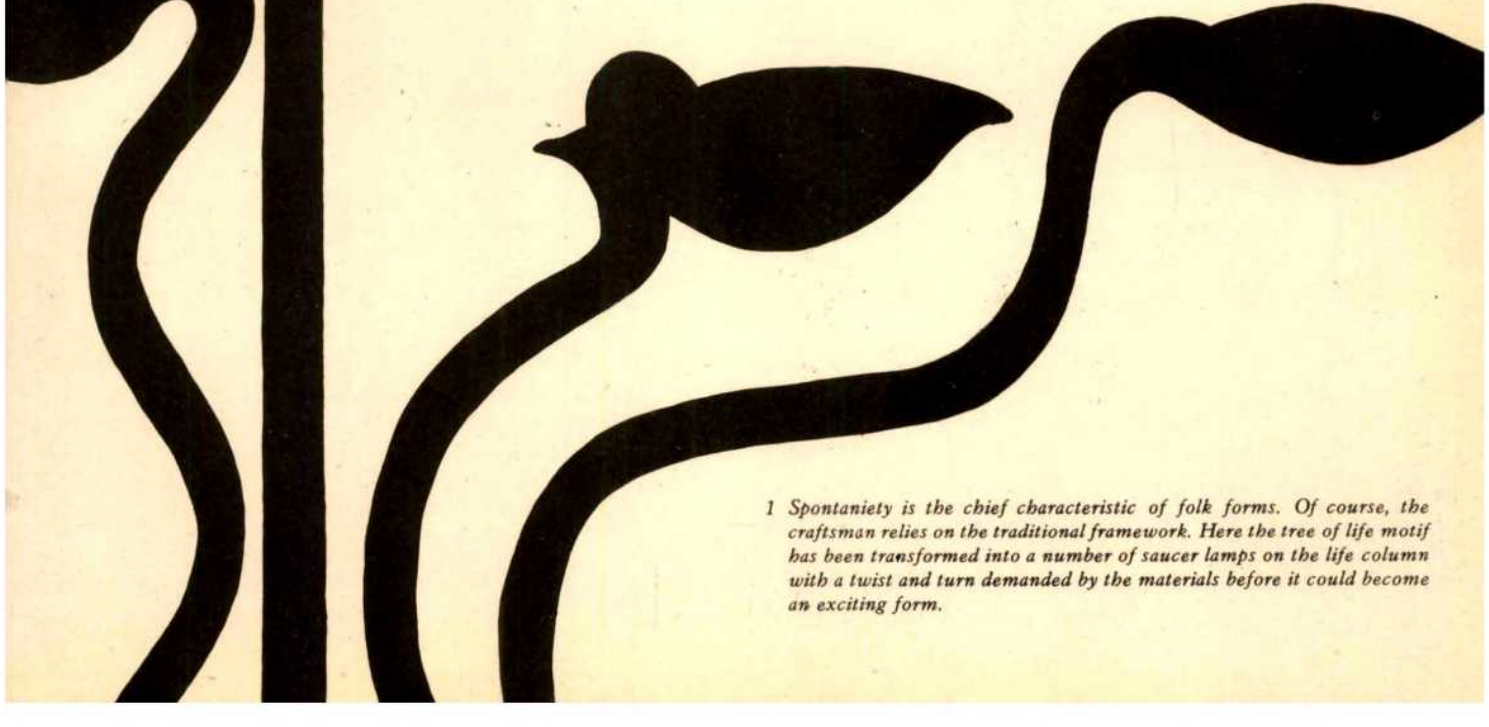
No wonder that the potter has been likened to God. In Hindu mythology the Supreme creator, Brahma, is said to have moulded man into shape on the wheel, even as he breathed the life-breath into him.

As the archetype of man, Brahma, himself, who was first and foremost, the Maker, appears in our *Shilpa Shastras* as the God Vishwakarma.

In the epic *Mahabharata,* as sung in what is now called Haryana, Vishwakarma is described as: 'Lord of the Arts, master of a thousand handicrafts, carpenter of the Gods, and builder of the palaces divine, fashioner of every jewel, first craftsman, by whose art man lives, and whom as great and deathless God they continually worship.'

The ancient Hindus, thus, seem to have conceived man as the maker of things. The work of creation was to them a natural function of life, a kind of worship, a mode of activity by which man realised himself, as an individual and as part of the group.

Work was a free activity, but, as it was determined by man himself, it had a purpose.



1 Spontaniety is the chief characteristic of folk forms. Of course, the craftsman relies on the traditional framework. Here the tree of life motif has been transformed into a number of saucer lamps on the life column with a twist and turn demanded by the materials before it could become an exciting form.

Actually, man had begun by making tools for use in the hunt. Then he made pots and pans for cooking the food. Later, he made the house or scooped the rock for a shelter. And, in order to conquer his prey through magic, he drew figures on the walls to show himself as showering arrows on the hunted beasts.

All these works of man are now called 'Art'.

In reality they were functional activities.

A man is then distinguished from the animals because he can use his hands and his head to express his heart's desires.

As he wills himself into action, this very inspiration enables him to grow. The body-soul evolves as it acts to absorb nature and to shape it to some purpose, because imagination brings insight. More often than not, the purpose of human activity is for making useful things. Thus all creative work seeks to control nature and shape it into some kind of order.

Although man makes things for use, somehow, he makes them very well. Especially is this so, as he inherits skills, and he uses his visionary abilities to surpass works of previous generations.

And, surprisingly enough, all the work, which he does for himself and others, seems to give him a sense of freedom, as the anarchy of the disorderly world he has conquered appears before him in some kind of order of integral relations — beauty itself.

Thus, throughout the known history, the so-called simple folk have always made beautiful things for daily use.

Nowadays, these creations are called 'Folk Art', as against 'Fine Art' and 'Classical Art' in the English language. And the maker of things in the village is called a 'craftsman' as against the 'Artist' with a capital 'A'.

In our own prolonged traditions, there was no distinction between the craftsman who worked in a village, and the craftsman who worked in the Court.

For a century or two, during what has been called the 'Classical Renaissance' in the 4th and 5th century, the term *'Lalit Kala'* or 'Fine Art' appears. The Imperial Gupta dynasty perhaps patronised distinguished craftsmen and exalted their works in this way. Soon, however, the *Shilpin*s and the *Shapathi*s found themselves back in the villages, or in their guilds, scooping rocks for temples, carving sculptures for worship, and painting mythological scenes on the walls.

This is not to suggest that as soon as the Imperial courts vanished the craftsmen became less sophisticated. Indeed, the higher forms of organisation created by the patrons, was inherited and new styles emerged and even percolated into the more primitivist village communities with their relatively unchanging basic needs. And we see a vast proliferation of creative activity and much excellence, even as the means of production improved and better tools were invented.

All the same for centuries the creative work remained an act of self-realisation, the means for increasing worldly goods, ennobling them into beautiful forms, and exalting the personality of the artist, and the lives of those who used the objects, as well as evolving higher consciousness in the maker himself through the insight he gained into the interaction of nature, society and himself.

In so far as the craftsman was part of the village community and was paid for his work, mostly in kind and not in cash, he remained integral to the little co-operative republic ruled by the council of five. True, in being elevated to the Court, and after being given rewards in money and robes of honour, he was sometimes alienated from the village life. The dominant pattern, however, was of the craftsman working as an autonomous human being, owning his tools and materials within the framework of the village, or in the composite guild, and remaining a free man in an organic society.

With the coming of the machine, after the European Industrial Revolution, the entire handicraft order began to break up. The craftsmen began to seek a living in the small or big towns. And as money became

important in payment for the works, the artisan turned to making immediately saleable objects. His works are now familiar to us as bazar art. The artisan was patronised by the alien rulers, and their imitators, more for the exotic character of his works than for his real skill. And, the change of patronage brought the English term 'Artist' into the common parlance. Copying the western models became frequent and the traditional arts have since then been more or less in decay. Often cheap plastic goods have taken the place of artefacts made with local materials.

It is not possible to revive the handicrafts of the ancient and medieval worlds in the present machine civilisation.

All that may be done today is to study the techniques of the craft tradition, gain insight into the methods and materials of the craftsmen, and to integrate these into our own emergent agro-industrial civilisation.

The co-existence of the various repetitive village forms with the machine-made products of the *kisch,* commercial culture presents the problem: how to recreate, from the surviving remnants, beautiful objects, in new, vital, significant forms in the changed society?

This requires the creation of a new sense of design, which may be a synthesis of the techniques of the past with the new tools and materials which have become available, through the machine.

The transition from the autonomous skills of the old order to the art objects which are bought and sold, mostly for money value, will be fraught with dangers as yet unknown to us.

But it is possible, if we are aware of the challenges of the transition, to save the body-soul of the creative craftsman: we can restore to him his place as an integral member of society, away from the pool of the vast unemployed labour mass, drifting towards any work which can give him sustenance, away also from the isolation of his new status as 'Artist'.

The craftworld of Haryana has been in decay for more than a century. Is it possible to resurrect it and make it a living force?

Sheafs Gleaned from the Harvests in Haryana

There is a folk tale current in Haryana about why the Mahabharata war was fought at Kurukshetra.

Lord Krishna was driving his herd of cattle in search of good pasture land during a drought in Brindavan. He had heard that the lands to the west of Jamna, further up by Kurukshetra, had plentiful grass.

As he goaded the cattle towards this land, he saw a farmer working in his field, while the son was standing nearby and watching him.

Lord Krishna saw that the peasant was busy trying to put earth, with his hands on a ditch, from which the water was leaking out of his field.

The current was strong, as there had been good rains. The rushing water broke the boundary as soon as the farmer finished piling up the mud.

At last the peasant began to look for a stone or something by which he could plug the gap.

As he could not find anything, his eyes fell on his son. At once, he cut off the boy's head and put it on the boundary to stop the leaking water.

Lord Krishna was struck by the cruelty of the peasant. Then he reflected that the man was doing his duty by the land. No harvest would grow if the water flowed out.

That is why it is said, Krishna thought out the idea that everyone must fulfil his duties.

And when he was asked by Arjuna of the Pandus, whether or not to fight his cousins, the Kurus, Lord Krishna advised that the Pandus should fight for their just cause, as it was their duty to uphold their rights. And what is more, he decided that the battle should be fought at Kurukshetra, where he had been struck by the peasant's sense of duty.

The moral code of that period seems to have demanded that the tilling of the land was the highest duty.

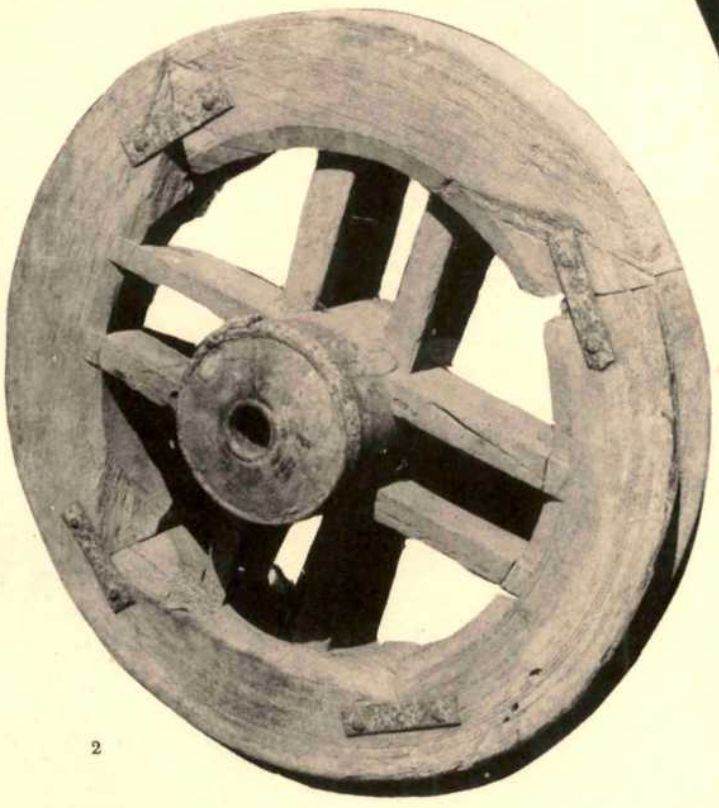
In fact, it is likely that the *Mahabharata* epic recreates for us the period of transition from the pastoral to the agricultural society.

The late Prof. D. D. Kosambi, has gone so far as to suggest that one of the causes of the *Mahabharata* war, was the struggle between the Kurus, who had usurped the area of the rich iron ore mines of Haryana, and the Pandus, who were sought to be exiled from that area.

Be that as it may, certainly the hard earth verging into the ridges, which becomes the Vindhyachal hill of Rajasthan, needed more resilient and sharper iron points than the wooden ploughs which were used in the soft alluvial earth on the plains between the five rivers.

We do not know how long it took for the people to move on from the tools of the early Vedic age to those of the later periods.

But certain ceremonies like worshipping the plough, the first shoots of the harvest, the adorning of bullocks with fine clothes and painting their horns, had become established customs during the epic period.



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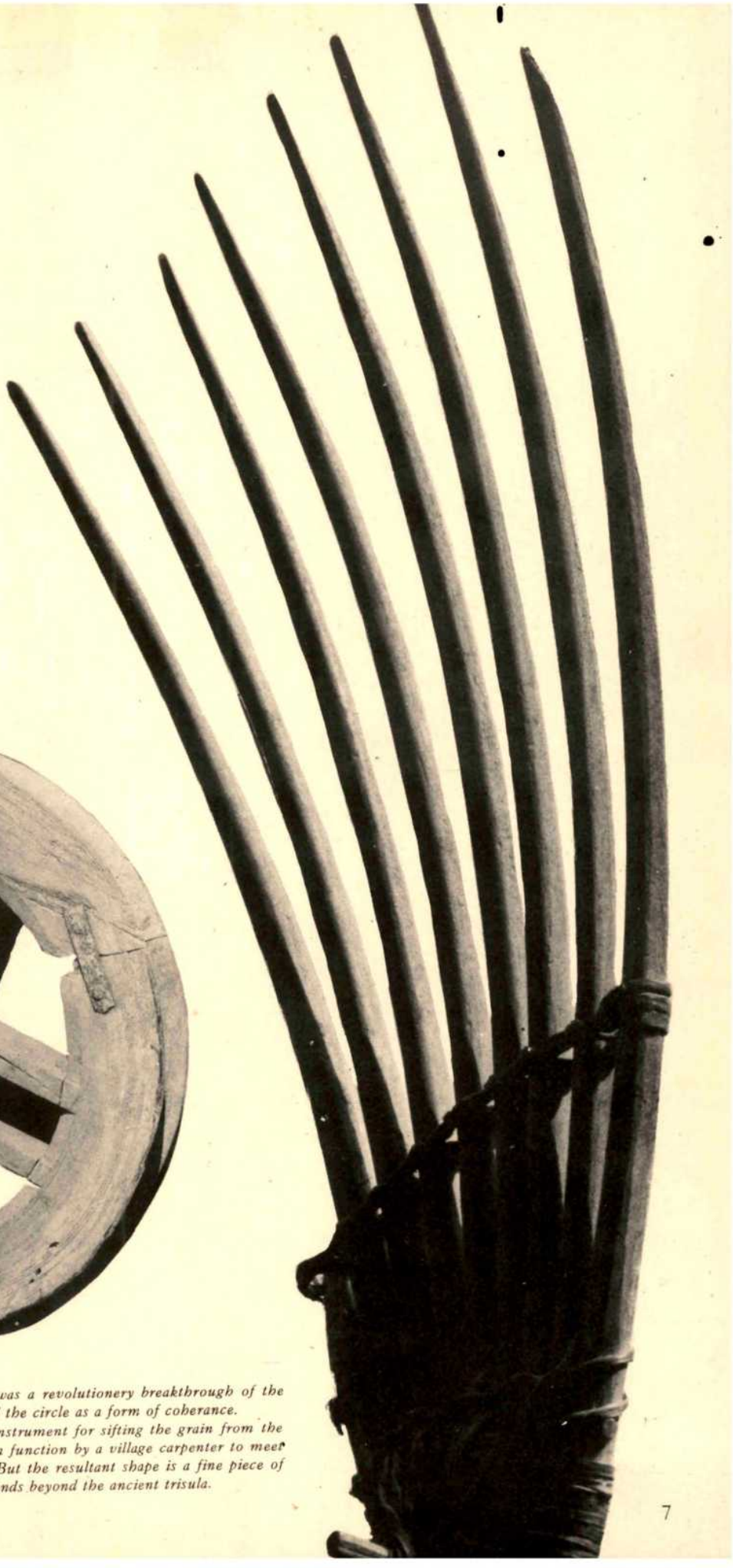


2 The invention of the wheel was a revolutionery breakthrough of the ancient world. And it adduced the circle as a form of coherance.

3 The making of the wooden instrument for sifting the grain from the chaff obviously designed for a function by a village carpenter to meet a low budget by local wood. But the resultant shape is a fine piece of sculpture shaped by loving hands beyond the ancient trisula.

The beautification of the beasts of burden, the exaltation of the tools and the instruments, and the sense of pride in being peasants, seem to have created the aesthetics of the period.

The work of farming was, indeed, a duty, a necessity, even a punishment from the point of view of the Brahmins, because the farmers were of the lower castes and had condemned to work because of their bad karma. But the peasants had their revenge on the Brahmins by making food-growing a source of happiness.

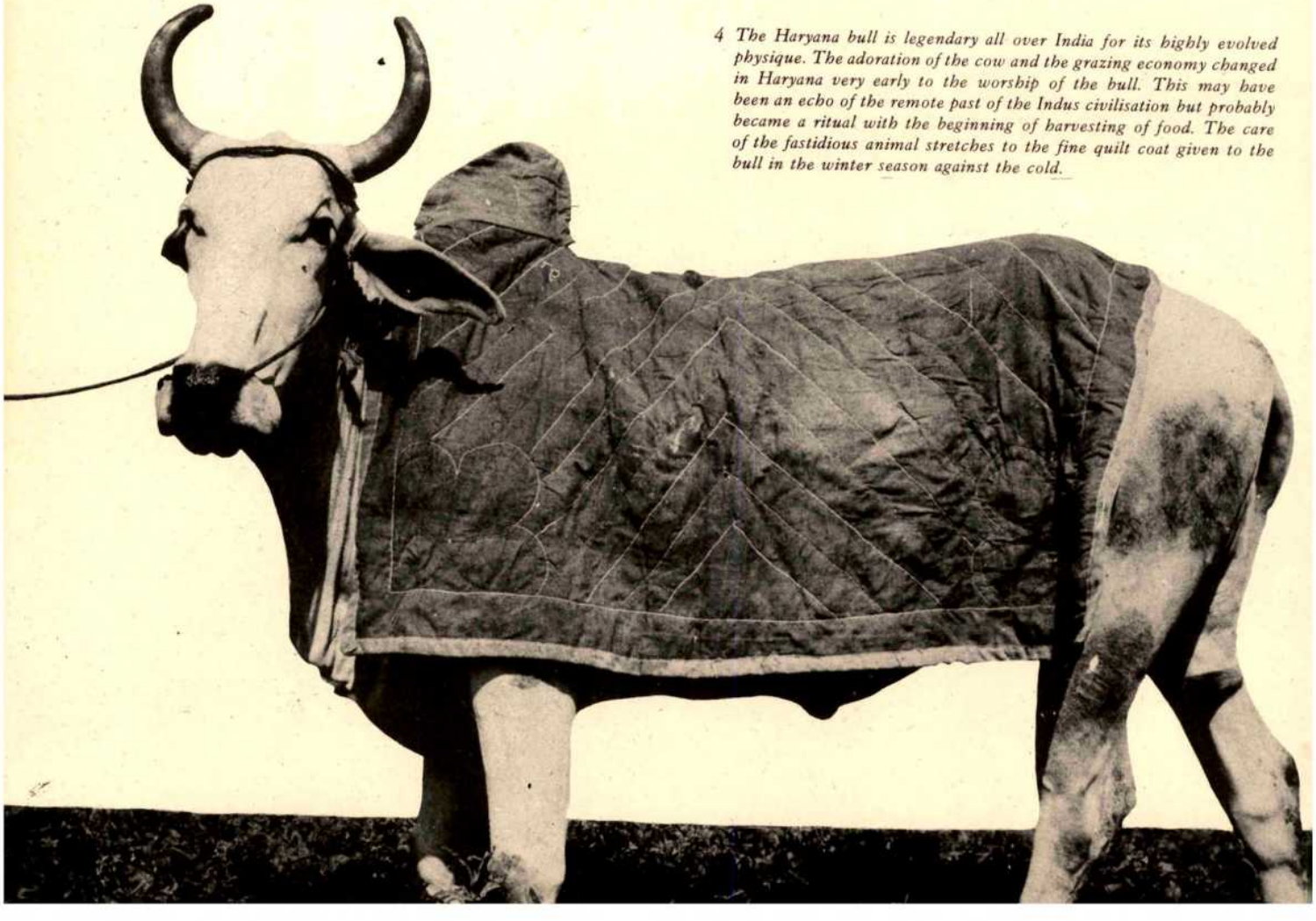
As they shared the food in kind with the makers of the ploughs, with the cowherds who tended their cattle, and with the other craftsmen who dug their wells, built their houses, made pots and pans. The act of farming became a highly valuable occupation.

The quality of life which arose from the excess of harvests, led to a continuous improvement in the making of things of use, which gave pleasure beyond their mere use.

Thus we notice that, apart from the exaltation of Lord Vishwakarma in the *Mahabharata*, there is praise for the skill of all those who labour.

It is not surprising, therefore, that everyone in the rural society, during the centuries adhered to certain traditional habits of creative work.

Always, the peasant built his own mudhouse with the help of the honoured mason. Even today if we see a peasant family building a barn, we notice the loving care which the old people specially bring to what has become a stultifying mechanical operation in building work in the town. The chain of men and women, who pass the baskets of mud and stone, sing rhythmically, to make the work pleasant. All the members of the family are trained to do the cowdung plaster on the walls, with the mud and straw and resin mixed together for binding. And they make reliefs of birds and animals and flowers and gold for heightening the even surface.



4 The Haryana bull is legendary all over India for its highly evolved physique. The adoration of the cow and the grazing economy changed in Haryana very early to the worship of the bull. This may have been an echo of the remote past of the Indus civilisation but probably became a ritual with the beginning of harvesting of food. The care of the fastidious animal stretches to the fine quilt coat given to the bull in the winter season against the cold.

To be sure, the aesthetic inspiration behind such labour is a fulfilment from the exuberance of spirit. That is why most village families begin to renovate the house after every harvest. In fact, the two main festivals, the Baisakhi in mid-spring, and the Deepavali in the autumn, follow the gathering of the two main crops of the year. The superstitions associated with the need to please the gods are mythical incentives to the freedom of the body-soul in the fulfilment of necessary labour to a noble calling.

Those of us who have participated in the folk festivals (enlivened by the beating of drums, the eating of sweets, the drinking of sherbats and liquor, the free rein to children to run wild, or to mount the round-about, the singing of the girls in chorus as they clap their hands for the rhythmic beat, the swinging on the swings, the buying and selling of beautifully finished household goods) know that everyone wants to live the good life after the harvest is in the barn.

And the good life cannot, according to the folk, be anything unless things made for happiness are created from the highest talent, skill and inspiration.

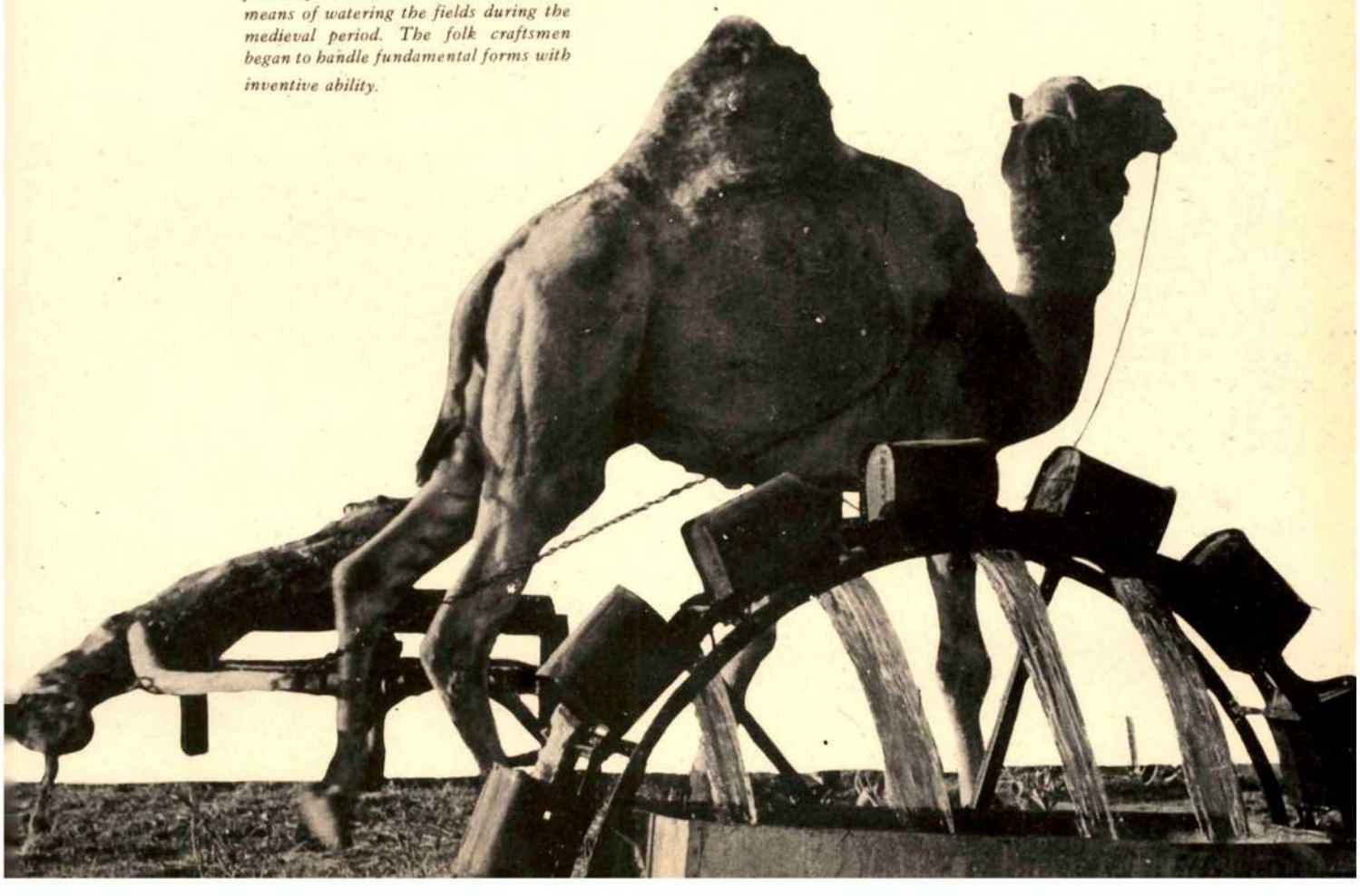
If we look at a peasant choosing a threshing prong from the stall at a fair, we will notice that he passes his hand lovingly on the surface to see how smooth is the finish of the handle.

If we observe a woman trying glass bangles on her bare wrists, we see that she selects her colours according to the texture of her skin.

If we see an old woman buying a pitcher to keep the water cool, she caresses the volumes to see that there is no flaw in the roundness.

If we see a family buying jewellery, there is a glow in the eyes of the would-be-bride, for whom it is being bought. And the insistence of the mother on the purchase of at least some pieces in gold shows the inherited pride in the richness which gratifies the senses and pride of possession and human vanity.

5 *The Persian wheel well with the shaft pulled by a camel remained an important means of watering the fields during the medieval period. The folk craftsmen began to handle fundamental forms with inventive ability.*



If we join a group of musicians, we will see how people have flocked to hear and soon to join the melody in a chorus which then becomes a *kirtan*, in fulfilment of the suppressed urges from the routine life, which have now burst into the freedom of the fair.

If we see the dowry being prepared over the years of maidenhood by the would-be-bride herself and the parents, we can notice how the outlook for the married life in the village is organised from the compulsion of aesthetic taste. The embroidery in the skirt or the phulkari has occupied the leisure hours of years, with materials chosen with a view to the matching of various tints. The bridal bed maker is always rewarded for his accomplishment in the use of lacquer which gives a permanent imprint. The *pira* (stool) maker is a specialist on his own, who knows how to make a symbolic Mount Kailash from wood, and paint it with the colours of the rainbow.

The maker of the brass and copper utensils is often the hereditory supplier of finished goods, in styles which go beyond their function and are developed into the beautiful forms preferred by a whole society.

The traditional group presumes that the essential shapes of the things for use in the married life will produce a special kind of emotion in the couple. So the diversity of colours, and forms has become habitual. But, we find that most families know which craftsmen to go to for their superior skill in creating the essentials of a dowry.

The phrase uttered by the Rigvedic poet to the young bride shows the early appreciation by the folk of the special emotion, through perception of forms—the taste, or *rasa*, of delight in beauty itself. The richness of human sensibility, through a well sung song, through seeing a lovely pattern on cloth, through hearing a fairy-tale, confirms the people's essential insight into what gives joy. And the care the parents take in teaching good manners to the young, from the joined hands surrender to the guests, to touching the feet of the elders, and the exact mode of polite address, shows that the cultivation of *rasa* has been considered an essential part of human life.

And it is not enough to have an inborn aesthetic emotion: it is necessary to cultivate aesthetic activity in order to see more intensely the vivid colours, to participate more intimately in the surroundings, and to uplift life from sordidness and chaos into an organised festival.

Of course, the aesthetic attitude is inherited by the whole human race.

Only certain peoples, who have consciously absorbed the beauty of thought and action and social practice, have created various traditions. In this way, the people of the *Mahabharata* period had achieved awareness of right and wrong, beauty and ugliness, humanness and non-humanness in the various forms of behaviour.

In this epic, which is one of the most comprehensive works of literature of mankind, truth and goodness and beauty have been made the essential powers of the highest self that is God—*Brahma Ananda, rasa.*

The exquisite miniatures illustrating the Krishna legend in relation to the Mahabharata war are primitivist renderings of the legends about the friend and guide of five Pandus. They are perhaps done by a court artist on his reitrement from the village.

(Pages 11, 12)

This objectification of the essences was a kind of popularisation of the concept of the unity of the cosmos, an exaltation of the practical life in which the human sense can be ennobled by alliance with the total richness of the cosmos.

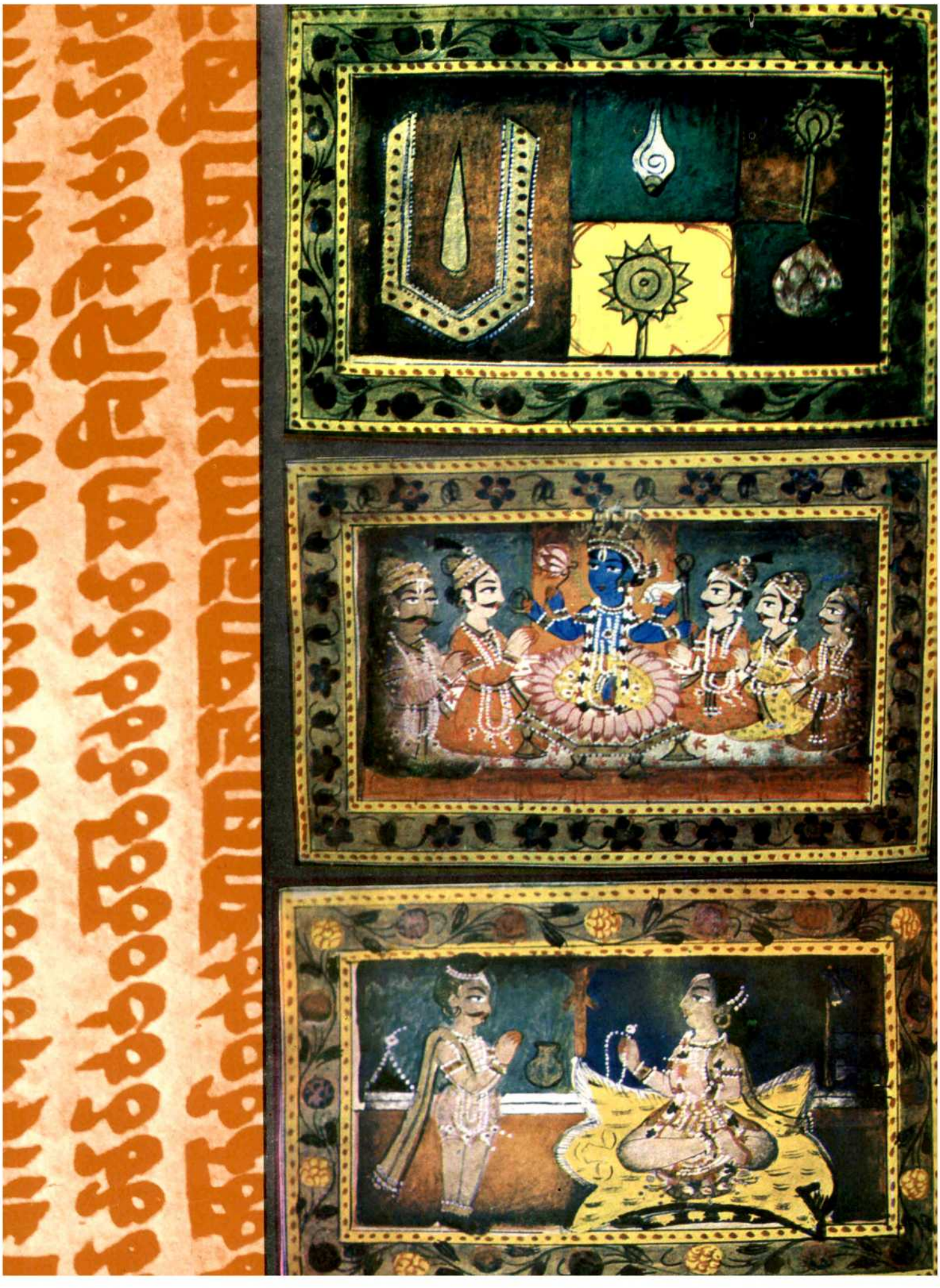
In this way, the whole of life, in its ordinary mundane reality, was sought to be made holy.

The first flush of the human sensibility to live a full life, thus exalted the aesthetic sense as the highest human sense.

So the ritual drawing on the doorstep, the relief on the wall, the making of terracotta images, the creation of space in the house, the moulding of metals, wood and clay were all sanctified in order to give special meaning to the emotion of human pleasure.

The values of devotion to duty, goodness to each other, and the sense of beauty all decayed specially during the period of prolonged alien rule.

The folk tales speak of much disruption. For instance, there is a story that he who sleeps all the time gets the he-calf.



The peasant whose buffalo was with calf was going on his way home. And he met a Banjara tribal, who also was taking his buffalo which was about to calf, to his village. The night fell and they made a pact. One of them would sleep for two hours, while the other kept watch. They did this in turn. But while the peasant was asleep, both the buffaloes gave birth to calves. The peasant's buffalo gave birth to a she-calf and the Banjara's buffalo gave birth to a he-calf. As the peasant did not awake to keep vigil for two hours, the Banjara tied the he-calf to the peasant's buffalo and took the she-calf for himself. When at last the peasant awoke he asked whether, infact, his buffalo had given a he-calf and the Banjara's buffalo a she-calf. The Banjara replied, that the one who sleeps is bound to get a he-calf, smiled and went away. The peasant realised that one who neglects his duty is always cheated of his dues.

There is another folk story about why the bullocks stopped talking.

Once upon a time a peasant was ploughing his field during the month of May, goading his bullocks with his stick. The bullocks were halting, because they were tired and thirsty. Oh! master, they said, please give us some water. The peasant said: 'Achha, after the next round, I shall free you and you can drink your fill'. But the farmer goaded them for several more rounds. The bullocks again asked: Sir, can we stop and have some water?' The farmer again promised: 'Achha, after the next round.' But he goaded them on, beating them mercilessly with his stick. The bullocks stopped and said: 'Oh! master please take pity and let us off to have some water.' The farmer said: 'Achha, after the next round.' The bullocks obeyed after saying: 'Achha, we will not talk to you again and make any more requests.' That is why the bullocks have stopped talking.

The lesson of the second story, as of many tales of this kind current in Haryana, is that, even in the epic period, cruelty had entered human life and exploitation was already rife.

There is the third story, which tells us of the neglect of truth also even in the *Satyug* or the age of truth.

Once upon a time, a Brahmin was preaching that Truth is God. In the gathering, *Kaliyug*, the age of untruth, was present. He listened to the Brahmin for a long time going on and on about the virtues of the age of truth, and how one should worship the Supreme God. After the sermon was over, *Kaliyug* said to the Brahmin: 'Oh! sage, the *Satyug* is long since over and now I, *Kaliyug*, am here. Why do you not tell stories about me? Why do you always hearken back to the past?'

But the Brahmin was a fanatic. The next day he again began to preach about the age of truth.

Kaliyug came to the temple as an incarnation of the wine merchant. After, enduring the sermons of the Brahmin, he said: 'How long am I to hear you about the age of virtue, you hypocrite? You come to my shop and drink liquor every day and you have never paid me, saying you will give the money the next day. Now pay me what you owe me!'

The Brahmin said: 'I don't know you.'

The next day, he preached again about the virtues of the age of truth. This time *Kaliyug* came in as the incarnation of a butcher. After hearing the sermon, he said, for all to hear: 'Oh! sage, you who are so good, you don't mind eating flesh. Everyday you have been buying meat from my shop and you promised to pay the next day. Now pay me my dues.'

The preacher of the virtues of the age of truth and goodness and beauty, said he had never gone to the butcher's shop.

Those who were hearing the *katha* had, however, seen him fetching meat.

No one came to hear the Brahmin's sermons about the age of truth anymore.

These tales show that the traditional concepts of a godhood as the source of human values, has been in decay for a long time in Haryana.

During the infiltrations of the medieval period, there was a revival of the varieties of religion, specially through the teachings of Baba Farid Shakarganj. This Muslim Divine combined the truths of the Hindu and Islamic religions and practised austerities for many years in Hansi.

The influence of his thought spread. His spiritual successor, Nizamuddin Aulyia, lived in the heart of Haryana and travelled to Hansi frequently. The teaching of the faiths continued to preserve some balance between the good and the bad.

In fact, Guru Nanak who took much from the Sufi saints, also travelled about Haryana frequently and preached the gospel of Baba Farid, of the weaver Saint Kabir, and the truths he had himself found in his own meditations.

The area of Haryana, lay, however, on the road of the infiltrators from the north. And, though rural life continued after every disruption, there was no year during which the land did not see the march of armies, looting, pillaging, murdering.

In the 18th and 19th centuries came the Ferungis from across the black waters. And they brought the sword and the Cross to the people. The two doctrine seemed to the people to be contradictory. Some folk, the oppressed outcastes, accepted the Cross.

By and large, however, the alien conquerors could not take root in the local landscape.

Only the people accepted payment for work in a new kind of slave society. And the values of the practical life prevailed.

Later, the coming of the machine through the alien rulers, brought subservience to a new kind of oppression. The value of the handicrafts fell.

Consequently, the aesthetic sense, which was invested in the things made with the hand, lost much of its meaning.

This does not mean that the ritual of the old life, based on the genuine emotion of pleasure in the presence of beautiful forms, harmonies of sound, and the joys of festivals, have not survived. But they have become habitual and ritualistic.

Since our emergence into freedom however, there has begun a rediscovery of our culture.

Today, we are asking again, as we did in the age of *Mahabharata*, questions about the quality of life itself.

Our people seek to discover the emotion of joy in work. We ask questions about justice and injustice. We are concerned with good and evil in human relations. The free individual in our new age seeks to achieve the good life in the making of things for happiness.

The education of the young to the sense of duty is bound up with the teaching of what is good because, ultimately, the capacity to appreciate beauty and to discard ugliness, comes from the moral instinct for what is good and bad. For instance, it is not possible to live the good life in a dirty village, with no drainage, no playground for children, no roads, no trees and no conveniences.

The renovation of the life of our folk, by absorbing the new means to create order, will naturally bring in the atmosphere for creative work.

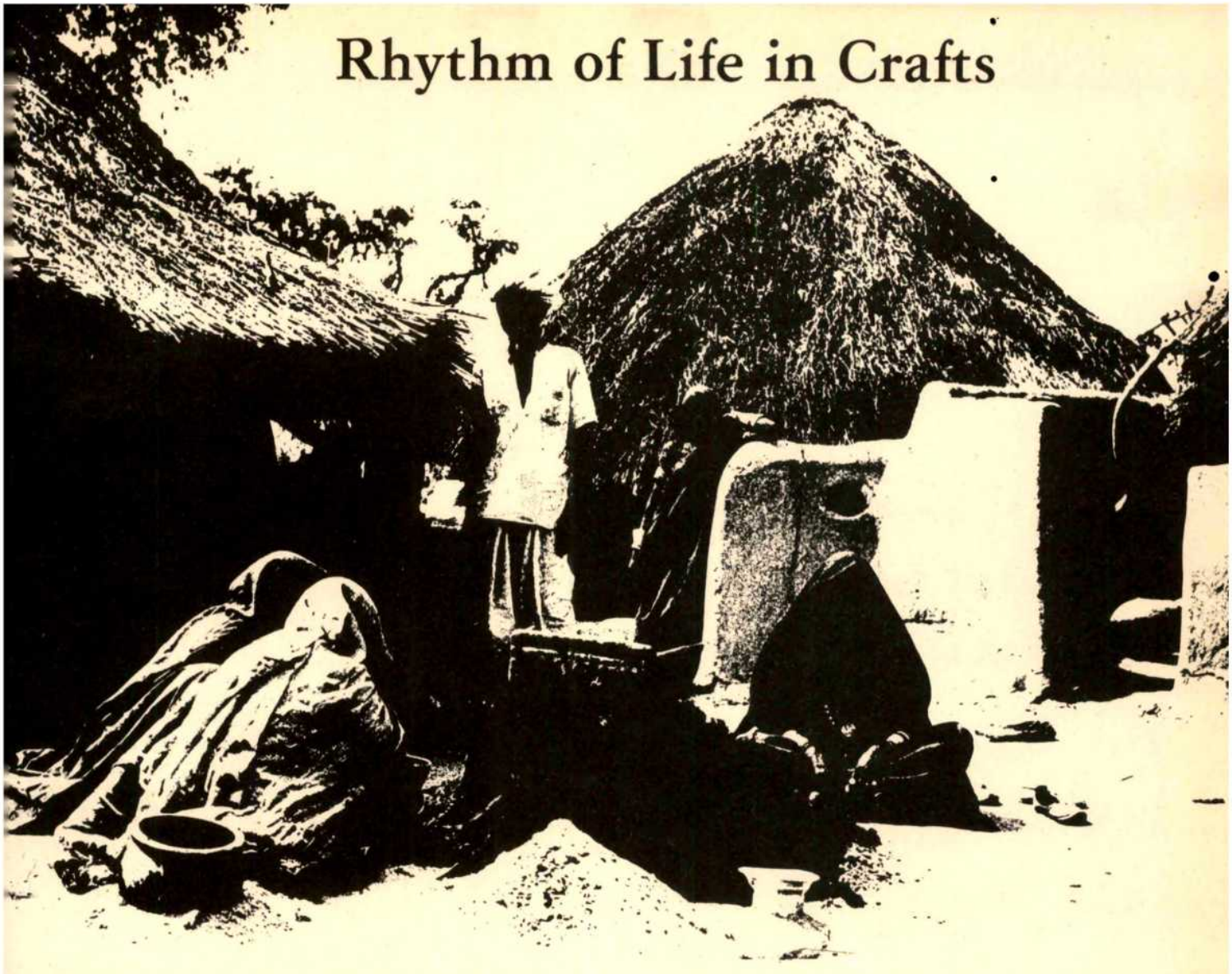
The sense of quality in the making of all things, which is the aesthetic incentive in man, will also compel discrimination between the beautiful and the ugly.

The sympathies and antipathies which improve the things we make, will be cultivated.

Consciousness of beauty is one of the highest expressions of human sensibility, without which man is no better than the animal.

Beauty will prevail.

Rhythm of Life in Crafts



7 The local materials thatch and stone lent themselves to different shapes from bricks. The peasant has inherited the traditional skill to shape these materials in aesthetic forms.

One of the earliest expressions of peoples on the gathering of a harvest is in the communal dance.

In the primitive peoples, it was merely a thump of the feet to the tune of clapping hands.

Later, the rounded pitcher was beaten and produced an echo, to which people moved.

And then, the leather drum was invented to produce greater resonance. And the folk have danced to this music, as if it was the heartbeat of the world.

Sometime after the epic age, we hear of the old legendary God Shiva, a wild fellow who spent his time wandering about in the forests, helping the jungle folk with his magical potions. He smeared his long plaits of hair with ashes, sat in samadhi (prayer) for long periods; then woke up to the rhythms of heaven in a sheer abandon of movement and became charged with the spark of divine ecstasy and jumped, capered and swayed his arms, to represent the earth aspiring to the stars, or awakening to the light, from the darkness of the nights.

The learned Brahmins despised the wild Shiva for a long time.

But the people found in his energetic expressions, the bringer of light into the dark forests, an inveterate pilgrim wanderer of the earth, a hero performing wonderful deeds, the ideal God, with whose name on their lips they could go to defend their lands against all attacks.

And soon this personification of energy, the beloved of Parvati, daughter of the Supreme God, became the incarnation of the rhythms of life.

Like the heat in the firewood, he seemed to exhude his power in dance and moved the entire world into action.

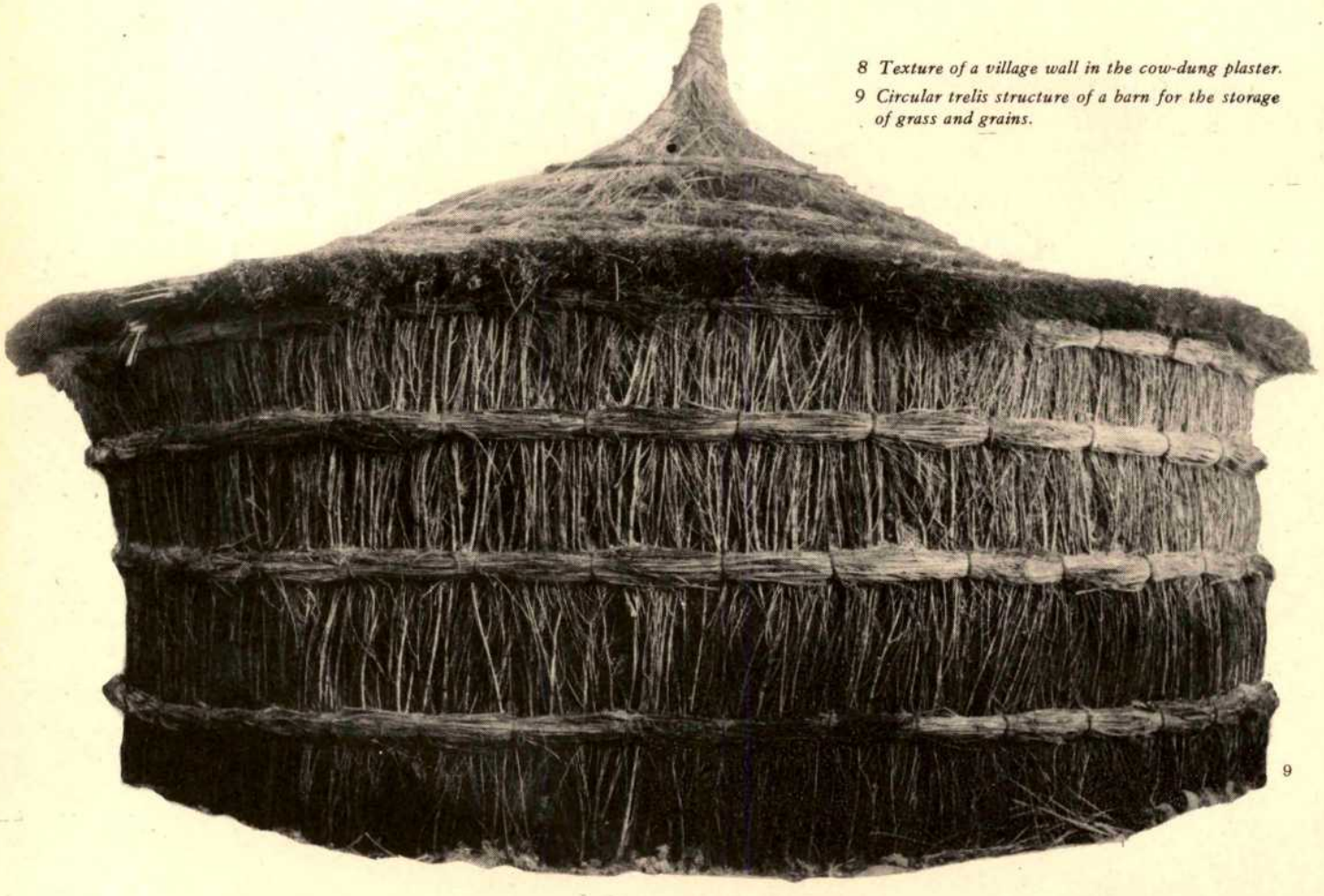
Soon the myth grew up that the Supreme God had sent Shiva to the earth to demonstrate that he was ever present among men.

The story goes that he descended upon the world from Heaven, when some of the heretic folk did not believe in him. As he appeared before them, they threw a snake to bite him. Shiva wrapped the snake round his neck, as though he was absorbing into himself the snake cunning of mankind. They sent a tiger to eat him up. He ripped the tiger's skin with his little fingernail and wrapped it round his body, as though he was absorbing into himself the tiger fury of mankind. The heretics then sent a dwarf to kill him. Shiva stamped on the dwarf's back and began to dance his cosmic dance, in the circle of fire. Thus Shiva destroys the cunning, the fury, and the evil of the universe, and preserves the world by the eternal dance of the cosmos which he symbolises.

The concept that the world is everchanging, from the energies implicit in the matter, became, very early, part of folk consciousness. The earth showed, in its various illusions, the phases of Maya, the different phenomena of the ultimate noumena, the reality of Brahman the Supreme.

8 Texture of a village wall in the cow-dung plaster.

9 Circular trelis structure of a barn for the storage of grass and grains.



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This idea of rhythmic vitality entered the life of the folk.

The house was not merely a mass of mud or stone or lime. The very propitiation of the Gods, by breaking the coconut, before beginning to build, was to enshrine the fecund energies under the plinth. And thus the foundation, the walls, and the roofs of the structure, became so many energies, in relation to each other. In fact, the house was supposed to represent the structure of the human body, with the energies of the head, the heart, the face and the hands—all co-ordinated in its space relations. The sketches on the walls were also to express feelings. The animation by relief was to emphasise before the onlooker what they might not see in silent lines.

The pots and pans made by the craftsmen, had to have rounded volumes, loveable to look at and warm to the eye in their colours.

The gurgling of the pitcher and the voice of the slender necked Surahi had to be audible to the fetchers and carriers of water.

The weaver hummed the song as he pushed the warp and the woof.

The would-be-brides were aware of the change that would come in their lives, when the drove of birds, they were, would fly away from the parental nests.

The street games were played according to songs.

The power of rhythm was a kind of magic invoked through prayers.

The very salutation to Prithvi, the earth, invoked the radiance, the warmth and the fire of becoming into the static being.

Each act of mundane life was modelled on the wonderful deeds of the heroes.

Even today, whenever you ask the folk in Haryana about the history of a village, they invariably tell you that Arjuna and his four brothers rested there on their way to paradise.

In the medieval period, the Muslims absorbed this concept of rhythm, and they also embodied it into their faith by glorifying the dance of the dervishes.

From the awakening of the dawn, to the stimulation of the circadian rhythm of the body-soul by a walk into the fields, to the ablutions in the fresh waters of a stream, a rivulet or a well, the early morning work in the fields, the midday meal, the siesta in the afternoon under the shakes of the trees, the weeding and hoeing, and the return to the hookah and gossip—the moods were sustained by direct contacts with the energies of the earth, stimulated by the sounds of the cattle bells during the day and the sight of the pasturage, and the indwelling in prayers in the evenings.

There is no act of the folk, faltering and indistinct and troubled as it may be, in the broken rhythms of the 20th century, that cannot be traced back to the perfect rhythm of the heavens, of which the inspiration was given in the myths and legends that were woven as part of our oral culture.

The crafts are the means by which the real materials are used to create things, for the earthly paradise. The clay is used to produce the harmony of the rounded pitcher. The cloth is embroidered as a fairytale. The paintings on the walls recreate the images of the Gods and heroes, or men and women and children, as in dreams.

The folk have always lived the real life with an uncanny awareness of fantasy, as a noble, exalted and splendid life of Gods on earth.

Their creations in the crafts embody the essence of beauty, grace and joy in the things of the ordinary life.

Building

Space in our tradition has been considered cosmic space. The area occupied by the house is a part of the little world within the big universe.

The Aryan havan kund, or sacrificial altar, was supposed to be square. So the cube was holy.

The peasant's house from the very ancient times has continued to be a square.

The ceremonies associated with the consecration of space, have been described in the *Shilpa Shastra* called *Manasara*.[1] There were mainly by way of exalting the space meant for the house into a dwelling in the heaven or earth.

In order to propitiate the Gods, the craftsmen first put up a demon face, painted on an inverted earthen pot, to avert the evil eye from the house of the divine inspiration.

The materials with which the space was covered were taken from the local surroundings. The mud for the walls came from the earth washed by the waters in the village tank. The straw mixed with the mud was from the threshings of the harvest. The gloy was taken from the trees. The lime was fetched from the quarries and baked. The wood was felled from the trees in the forests of the common land.

As the space belonged to the Gods, no one owned the land. But everyone had rights in land, given by the Panchayat.

In the beginning, the farm house was built near the field. As the family grew, more fields were allocated for houses.

During the centuries, the groups multiplied and the farm houses divided by lanes, became villages.

The caste system began to operate centuries before the Christian centuries. This meant the three upper castes, the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, occupied the main villages, while the fourth caste of Shudras, the craftsmen, were given accommodation on the outer fringes. The outcastes, the noncastes, the aboriginals, were exiled into small hamlets beyond the pale.

In the houses of the upper castes, space was energised in view of the need for daily movement.

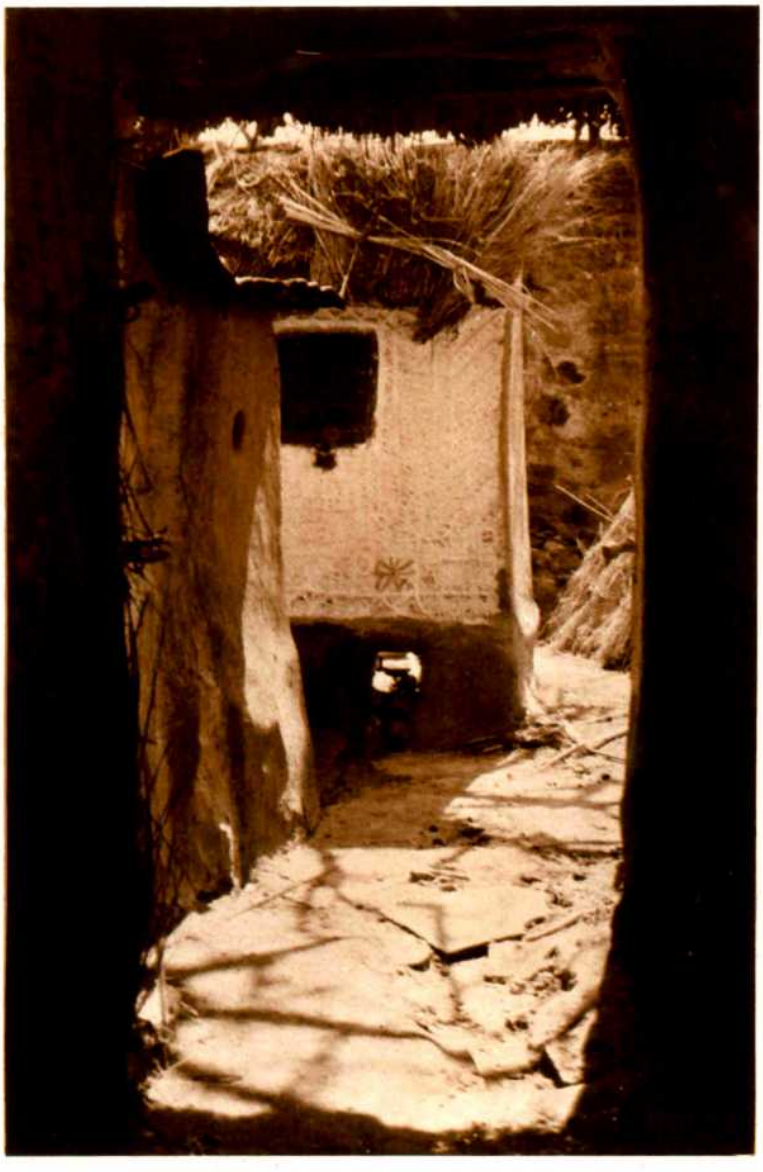
The entrance was reached by small steps. The large veranda space was covered by a roof, and later even walled for rest and recreation of the male folk. On one side was a cattle shed for the bullocks and milk giving cows, with a permanent manger. On the other side of the front wall, were the living quarters of the male folk.

At the far end of the cube, in one corner was the kitchen. On the other end was the bathroom. The drainage of both was let into the small vegetable patch, flanking the back wall, adjusted to a side wall, with an easy excess to the kitchen.

The ample courtyard was for outdoor living, extending from a shaded veranda outside the female quarters into the open.

For the summer months, the kitchen was made in the outer space, near the covered kitchen, to eject the smoke easily and to provide fresh air.

The daily routine was to spread the antiseptic cowdung plaster on all the floors, after sweeping the rooms. The ritual drawing of swastika, which enclosed the four corners of the world, was drawn outside each doorstep.



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10 The pavement of the lane in the village with broken ladi-stone shows ingenuity.

11 The primitivist relief sculpture for the navratri festival at the time of Dussera shows simplification of forms in a capacity for abstraction. (Courtesy: Jasleen Dhamija)

12 Corner of a village house with the utensils.

13 The traditional large wooden gate of the big house was carved with fine chisel work and composed in geometrical patterns. The splendour of the door was to announce the status of the owner of the house. This gate from Loharu Haveli has been influenced by Rajasthani workmanship.

There was no circumlocation about building this little cosmos. There was no copying of the palace. The function of the various rooms of the abode were approached directly, simply, and from the practical point of view. Except that the finish of the walls, the wood-work, the brass and iron decorations, which were to exalt the house, and give pleasure, were part of the style of architecture, designed by the craftsmen to evoke beauty. The climate, the soil, the coming and going of draughts, the course of the sun, the visibility of the moon, and the stars, were all attended to and human sentiment about the privacy of the female quarters was adumbrated into fanciful jali-work for the windows from behind, from which the residents could see everything but whom no one could see from outside.

The house was built by the joint labour of the family, on the principle of self-reliance, under the advice and with the help of the master craftsmen.

By and large the traditional structure lasted out into the late medieval period.

Only the multiplication of the wealth of those who took more land from the loot, meant the imitation of the palace in the haveli-style big house. This meant elaboration of the old farmhouse in stone and lime plaster, with one or two upper storeys on each basic structure. Those of the jagirdars, who lived in the village, only occupied more space, but did not deviate from the openness of the courtyard, etc. But the seclusion of women in the purdah society, brought by infiltrators from the north, made for a closed door life for the females.

Later, the excess of population and the division of the family, made for disruption. The needs of the individual family began to be ignored. Overlapping tended to congestion. The conflicting activities of the members of the family could not be contained in the house plan for a farmer.

Today, the village is virtually in decay, with drains running like cancers in the alleyways. The juxtaposition of new structures in the space meant for the Gods has created jigsaw puzzles. The machine shop has been installed in the house, making the chaos more chaotic. The problem before the folk is how to adapt themselves to the new agro-industrial civilisation, in new rural houses, with the minimum urban facilities, like main drainage, by the use of local materials, made permanent enough to obviate unnecessary daily chores.

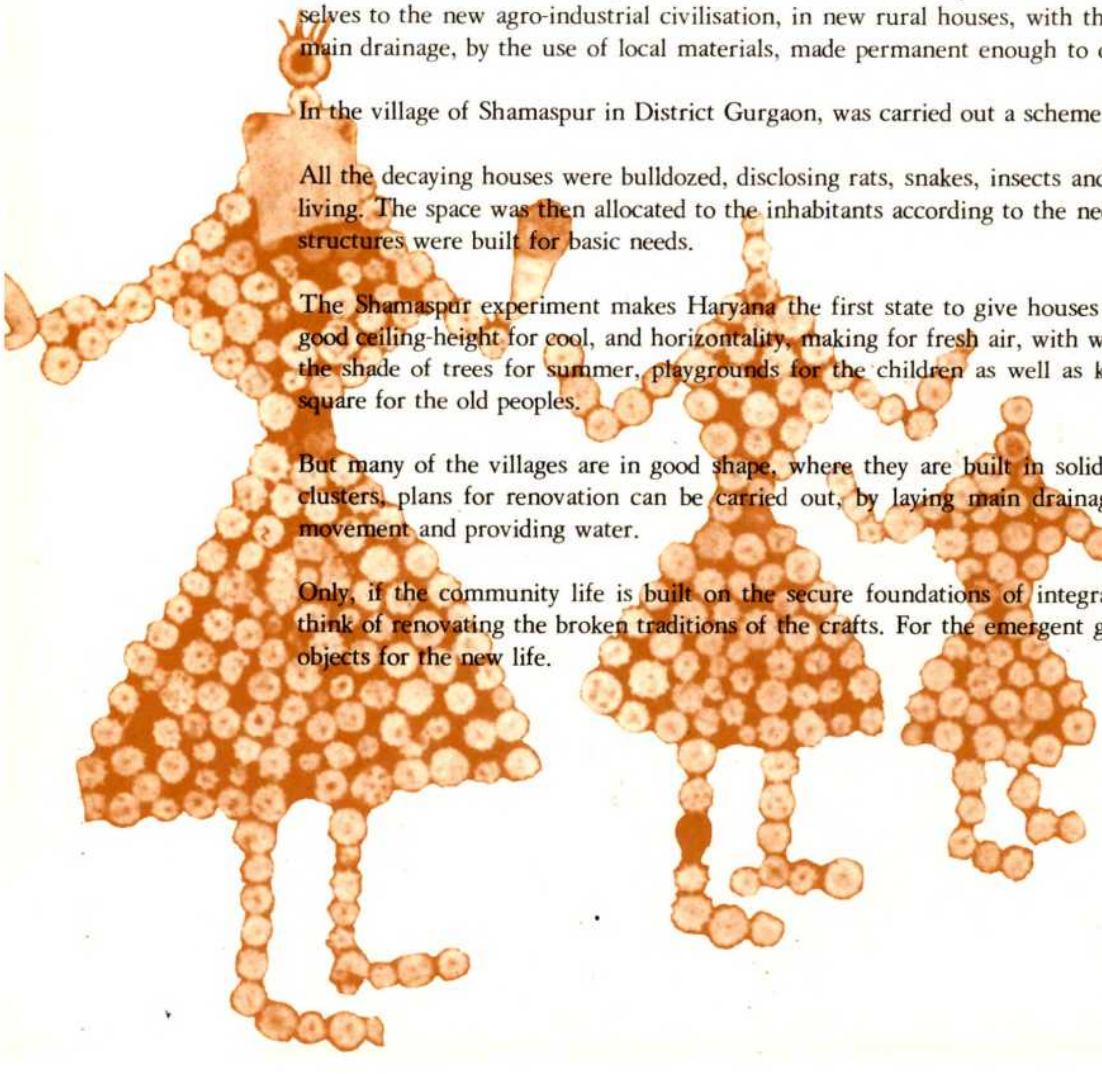
In the village of Shamaspur in District Gurgaon, was carried out a scheme for a model village.

All the decaying houses were bulldozed, disclosing rats, snakes, insects and germs of generations of inbred living. The space was then allocated to the inhabitants according to the needs of each family. And low cost structures were built for basic needs.

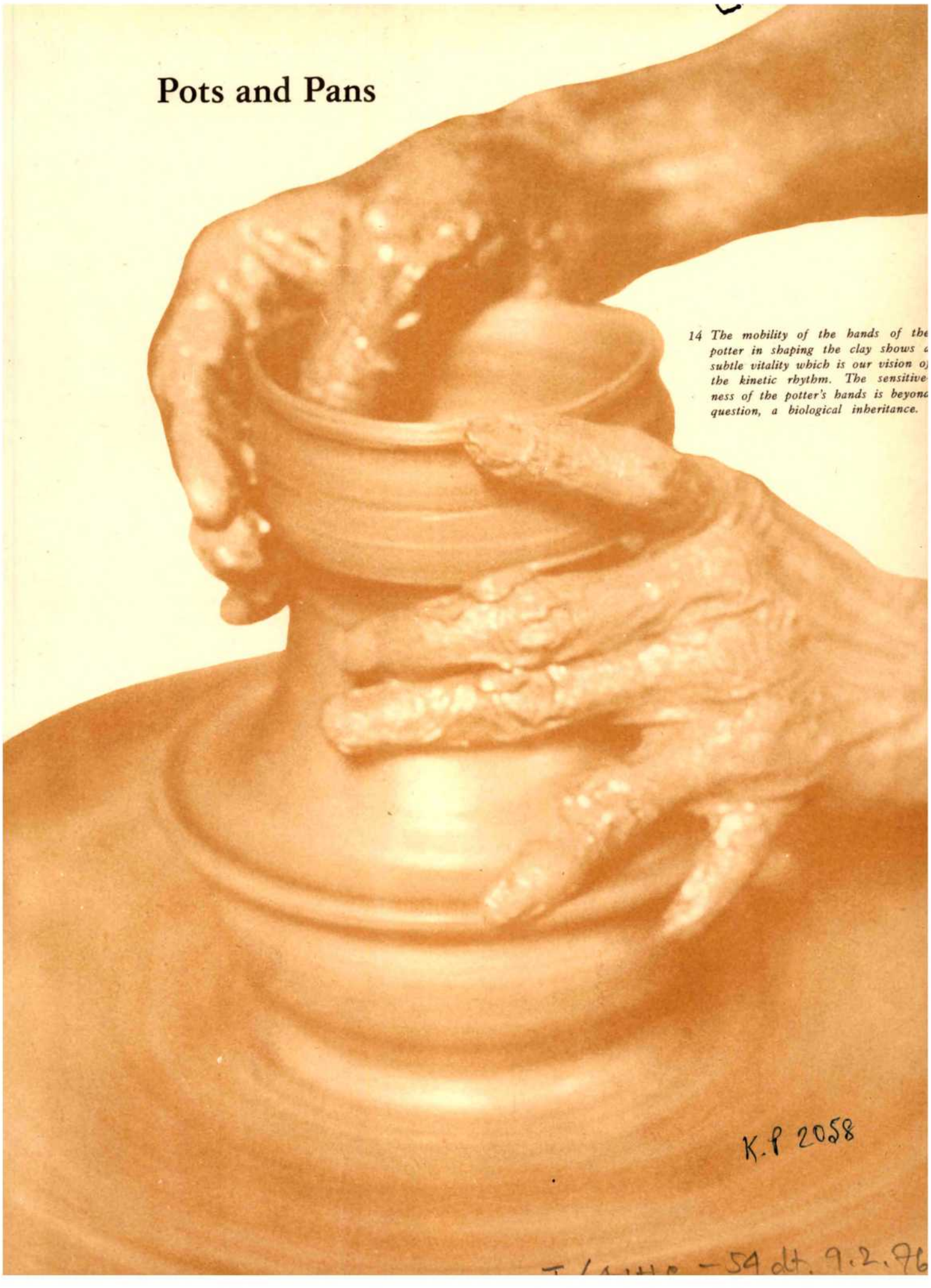
The Shamaspur experiment makes Haryana the first state to give houses with freedom on the floor plan, good ceiling-height for cool, and horizontality, making for fresh air, with wide lanes and plenty of light, and the shade of trees for summer, playgrounds for the children as well as kitchen gardens and the common square for the old peoples.

But many of the villages are in good shape, where they are built in solid mud, brick and stone. In these clusters, plans for renovation can be carried out, by laying main drainage, and clearing obstructions to movement and providing water.

Only, if the community life is built on the secure foundations of integral village housing, can we really think of renovating the broken traditions of the crafts. For the emergent groups will need freshly designed objects for the new life.



Pots and Pans



14 *The mobility of the hands of the potter in shaping the clay shows a subtle vitality which is our vision of the kinetic rhythm. The sensitiveness of the potter's hands is beyond question, a biological inheritance.*

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As in Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Rupar, Lothal, Navdatoli and other sites over the sub-continent, pre-historic finds have been discovered in Haryana. In fact, remains of pre-Harappan culture, of the copper-bronze age, have been found at Mitathal, in the District of Bhiwani. These settlers of 3500-2300 B.C., knew how to make pots and pans, terracotta bangles, beads, children's toy whistles and lotus seals.

There is a record of northern black polished pottery of about 400 B.C. in Raja-Karna-ka-Qila near Kurukshetra. On the same spot have been discovered remnants of redware and coarse grey ware of earlier periods. These finds and others in various parts of Haryana confirmed that, beyond the scattered hamlets, a village civilisation was already well established by the end of the epic period.

The Harappan culture continued to make painted and plain pottery, clean slipware and redware, with pinched and incised decorations.

In the pre-historic mound near Daulatpur, in Ambala District, 2000-1500 B.C., has been found red coloured pottery painted in black designs of geometrical and linear shapes.

Both the cowherd grazing communities and the agriculturists mainly used ceramic pottery for food making, water storage and eating utensils.

The designs of the pots and pans were perfected with that instinct which the folk had for an infusing sublimity in things of everyday use.

So that we find that when, in the medieval period, the vanity of the well-to-do feudal lords demands the utensils in silver or copper or brass or bronze, they copied the shapes of the ceramic pottery.

The folk forms seem to depend on the rounded volumes, which probably came down from the Harappan tradition of reference for the curvacious line. Children of nature, living in the midst of forests, their decorations are taken mainly from noticing the lyrical lines of foliage.

It is likely that the influence of Persian brushwork began to be felt in northern and western India in the 14th century.

The early technique of suggesting harmony, through rounded structures, and the symbolic drawings of the lotus etc., gave place to the principle of decorative isolation.

Specially, the Islamic potter began to choose a few blossoms and flowers from observations of nature, isolated these forms and painted his ware to symbolise his lyrical impulses.

The foliage selected is treated in arabasques, almost verging onto calligraphy.

Also with the Persian infiltrations, there came the blue pottery. This colour conduces to a soothing calm in the glare of the summer months.

As the capital of India was Delhi for many centuries, both under the indigenous dynasties and the foreign conquerors, the royal patronage encouraged the ceramic art. Under the small chieftains, or jagirdars, of the various districts, near the capital, the arts flourished, specially ceramics, for which the materials were more easily available in the countryside.

Beyond the conventional pitcher, the shaping of this jar betrays an unconventional imagination.

Thus in Ferozepur Jhirkha, in Loharu and Pataudi, the pottery survived as a living practice.

Of course, the coming of alluminium pots and pans has dethroned the earthenware in most parts of Haryana.

The conflict between the handicrafts and the machine made objects, is a drama which is being played out in the conscience of all men and women in our landscape.

The questions are: are we conscious animals, who will use things for pleasure, above routine handling? And shall we bring that extra feeling to bear for beauty that is inborn in us but often suppressed?

We have to ask why our ancestors loved to be in the heart of nature, with the hills and the streams, and why we have condemned ourselves to the narrow walls, low roofed prison cells of vertical urban structures, where we lose contact with the earth.

Maybe, it is the deadening of the sensibility.

A Haryana potter, was asked why he had chosen to migrate from Delhi to a small village, fifty miles away. He said he had discovered a clay which gave a perfumed smell, unlike any clay he had used in the city. And this smell would add a new dimension to his pottery.

The potter teaches us how to follow our innermost instincts.

17

16

16 The lovely hookah forms introduced by the northern infiltrators shows versatile handling of three different materials: clay, wood and jute twine. The craftsman at his best could handle many different techniques.

17 The decoration of the chilum of the hookah with cubes and binding line and incised patterns was under Iranian influence.

The Warp and the Woof

In the *Mahabharata*, we hear of the Kuru demons, who wished to disgrace Draupadi, trying to undrape her sari. And, from the dhotis mentioned in this epic, we know that the fore and oft the human body was covered by the monarchs and their queens with woven cloth.

The bulk of the populace wore fresh garments of leaves and flowers.

The art of weaving came to many countries through the observation of the spider's web.

And the growth of village civilisation perfected the warp and the woof in the pre-Christian centuries.

The tendency of the guilds of craftsmen in India was, however, upheld and controlled by tradition. So that they resorted to mechanical routine once the fantasy of the spider's web had been absorbed by their ancestors.

Only the frequent incursions of foreigners, into the composite social fabric of India, led to renewal. The styles of dress changed from time to time under external influences.

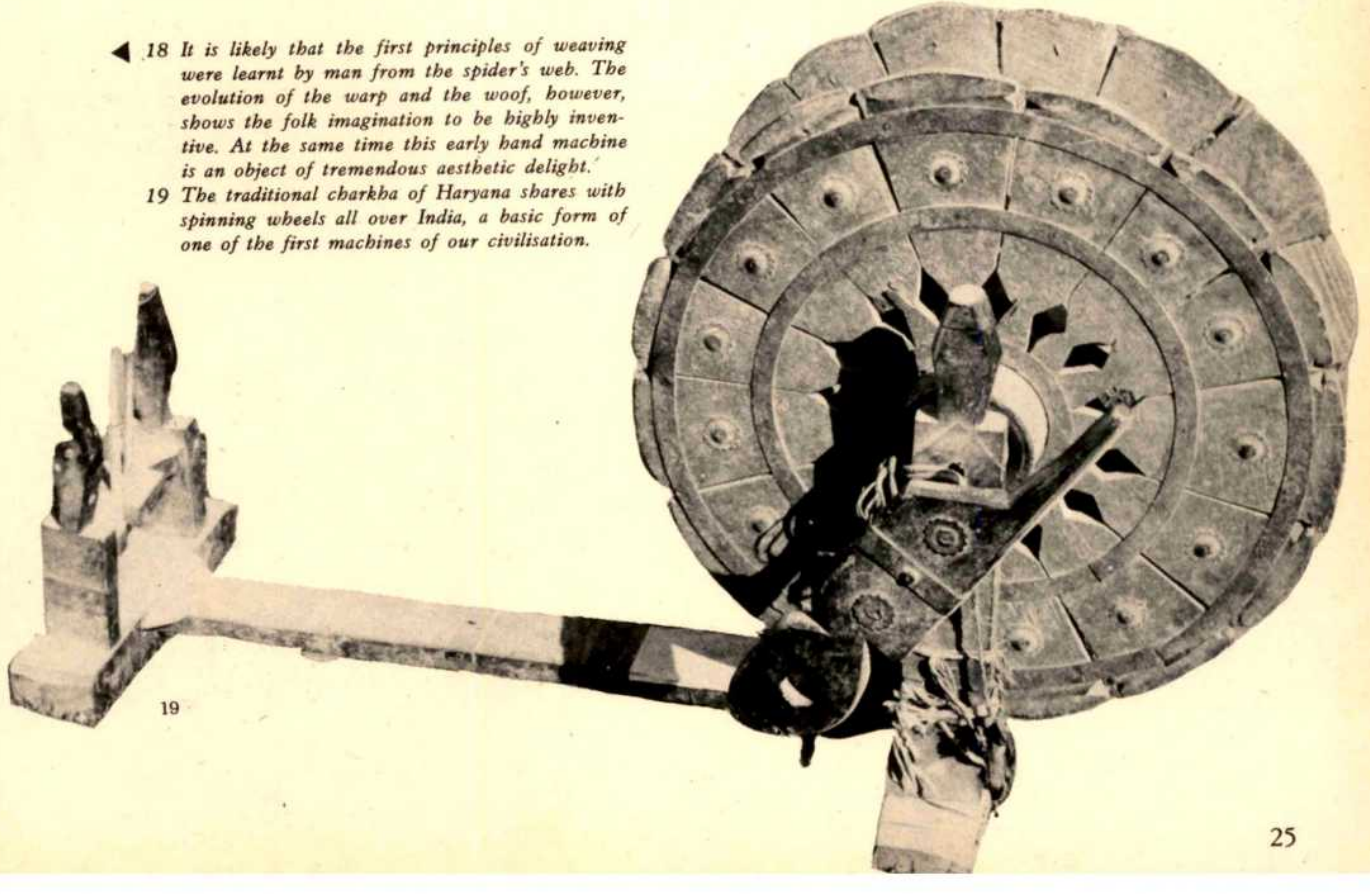
The earlier one-sheet for the girth of the body, which left the top uncovered, gave place to the two sheets towards the Christian era; and even to sewn garments under western Chinese Kushan influence.

And it is wellknown that the one sheet draped as a sari came with Helen, the daughter of Selecus Nicodar, when she married Chandragupta Maurya.

By the time of the classical renaissance, the gentlemen of the court and their ladies had evolved sophisticated styles of hairdos, cosmetics and clothes. The people, including the craftsmen, wore simple accessories. But they worked, in the feudalistic slave societies to provide beautiful designs, with gay colours to the lords, such as may be seen in the wall paintings of Ajanta and Bagh and Bamiyan and Tun Huang.

◀ *18 It is likely that the first principles of weaving were learnt by man from the spider's web. The evolution of the warp and the woof, however, shows the folk imagination to be highly inventive. At the same time this early hand machine is an object of tremendous aesthetic delight.*

19 The traditional charkha of Haryana shares with spinning wheels all over India, a basic form of one of the first machines of our civilisation.



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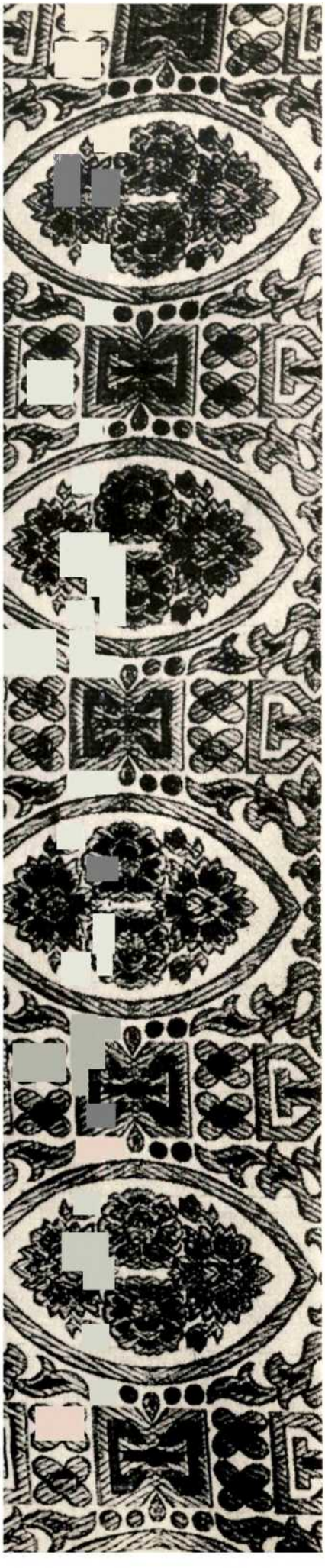


The weaving techniques became variegated during the medieval period. And the living store of traditional taste and skill seems to have penetrated to the masses in all parts of India.

The need for covering the floors of houses with cotton rather than woollen spreads popular in Persia, brought the *durree* and the *khes*. The hangings in the colourful tents led to the invention of the floral designs on rough cloth. The textiles for use in ceremonials became even more variegated under the Mughals.

As the craftsmen were shared between the palace and the village, the interpenetration of design became frequent.

Thus was achieved a richness in the colours of fabrics, even among the peasants, such as the more bare civilisations of the medieval period in Central Asia did not witness.

For instance, the chakdar Jama of Akbar's court and the Rajasthani and Haryana tunics of the peasants, have similar shapes.

The block printing of cloth, taken away as tokens from the holy shrines, by the pilgrims, remained popular through the ages.

The festivals at Kurukshetra made popular the hand printed Kalamkari.

The practice of exchanging scarves among the young and old in family gatherings, kept alive a whole tradition of weaving short lengths of cloth, the gay colours of which offset the drabness of daily existence.

Silken cloth was sacred in the form of gifts at birth, marriage and death ceremonies.

The turban and the dupatta had to be dyed in vivid colours, for wearing during festivals.

On the spring fairs of Basant, the yellow colour of happiness, was a popular hue.

The trousseau of the bride, which was prepared in every generation, shows, from the remnants which have survived, exquisite handiwork, sense of proportion and inventiveness of pattern.

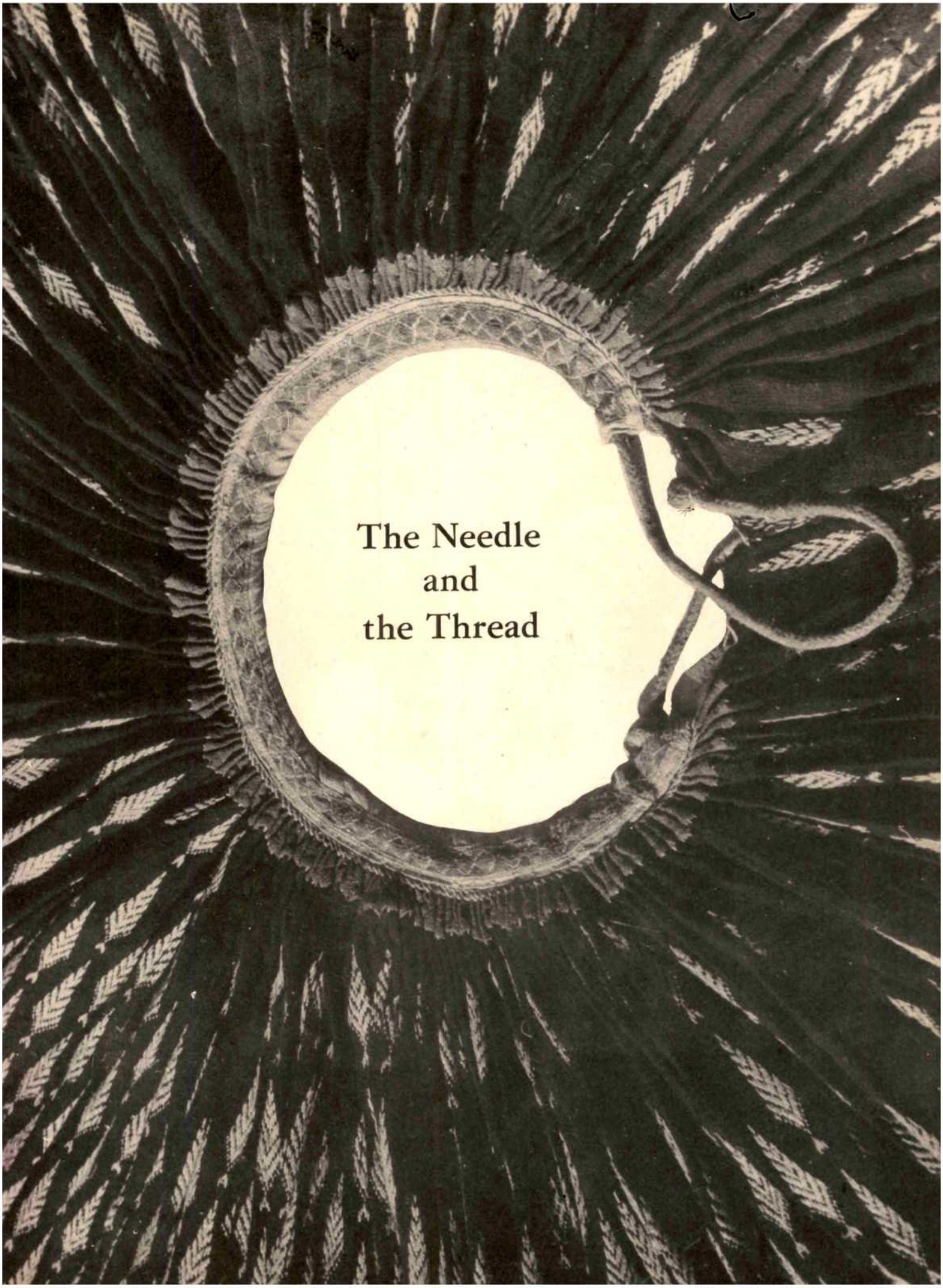
Even today, the charm of human grace is enlivened by the colourful dresses of the women folk, with an intrinsic sense of beauty displayed in the full heavy skirt, the bodice and the dupatta.

Inspite of the squalor of the puritan world of suffering and asceticism, imposed by want, under the rule of Aurangzeb, the richness of colours of the clothes of women has survived.

The gaiety of our handlooms has been rediscovered since our emergence as a free people. And the animated bright colours of Haryana fabrics are likely to spread more and more to the entire world, as the drabness of technology-run-mad in the West, demands richness for the eyes.

20-22 The dexterity of the weaver is mainly in his ability to set the warp ready for the shuttle to move into the woof. The decorative design is often put down in a rough drawing before beginning the weave. The tree pattern is simple. The variegated floral design is much more intricate requiring manipulation in a machine of various threads in highly advanced techniques of weaving.

23 The gay animal and bird forms are for capturing happiness. Many colourful motifs are woven in Punja durries in the villages. (p. 31)


The Needle
and
the Thread

One of the peculiar charms of folk costumes is in the patterns, which are often embroidered on every piece of clothing.

We do not know the origin of this craft, but, in the earliest times, all over the world, there is visible an instinctive delight in the absorption of flowers, leaves and foliage onto the clothes, specially those worn by women. Obviously, this may have come from the primitive life, lived mostly in the forests.

As human beings absorbed their food, their air and their water from nature, throughout evolution, they kept the memories of the elements with them, as reminders of energies which had gone into their own making.

Thus what became decoration was only a series of patterns developed from the vital life around men and women.

The vitality was made rhythmic by making the energies of lines in curves or in geometrical shapes, or in floral designs, in certain repetitive rhythms.

The repetition of the pattern made for a chorus of vital forms. The many coloured threads woven and embroidered, into the little mosaics, became part of the bigger design. Flowers and figures and foliage, were used as interchangeable elements.

When an embroidered phulkari or choli or skirt was made for the dowry of the bride, the colour, the size, and the form, of the girl, were considered and the hues were chosen, so that the colour energies might add further dimensions to her charm.

The full flair skirt in Haryana has an affinity with the Rajasthani apparel for females. The designs of embroidery on this skirt in silk diapering on rough material is done by the peasant women in their spare time with inherited skill practiced from girlhood onwards. The amazing fineness of finish shows an instinctive sense of beauty of forms.
The medallion on the top part of the skirt has been done for practice by a novice.

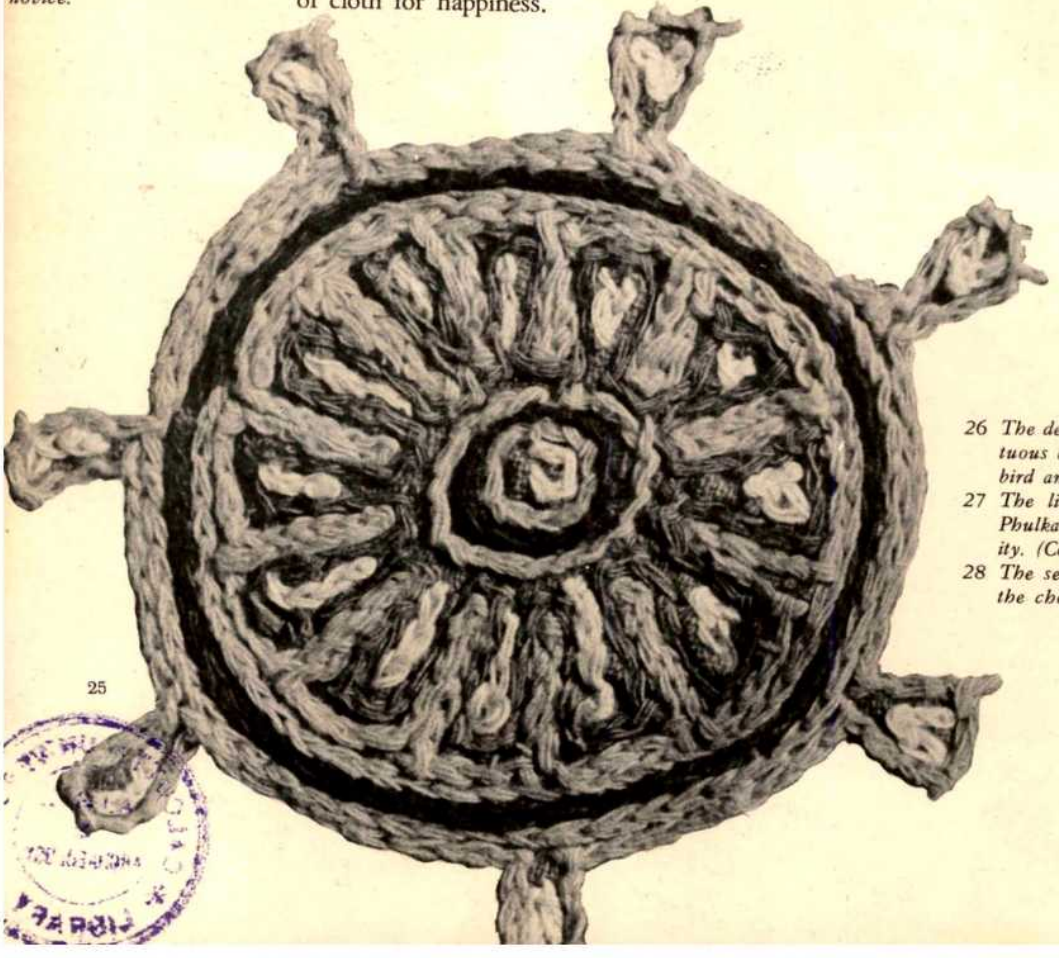
The embroidery on the phulkari was in sprinkled flowers, if the girl was very young. The shape of the embroidery was the geometry of cubes or rectangles, if the fabric was to frame a round moonface.

The choli design was in triangles and circles, with a piece near the nipple shown as a flower.

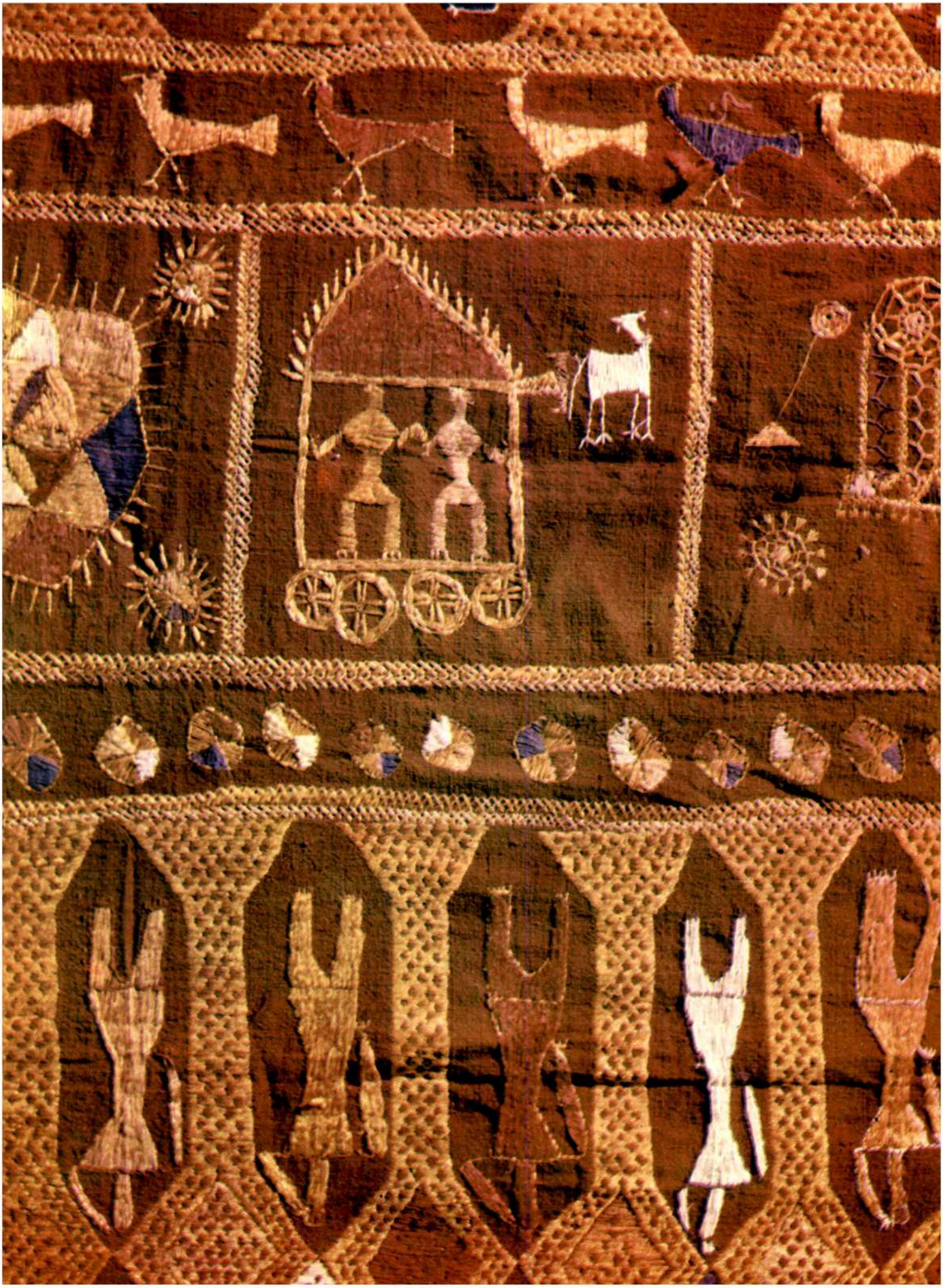
The flowers disposed of on a skirt, were in a musical repetition, without confusion, enough space being left on the plain cloth to show the arrangement almost as blossoms grow on the earth's surface.

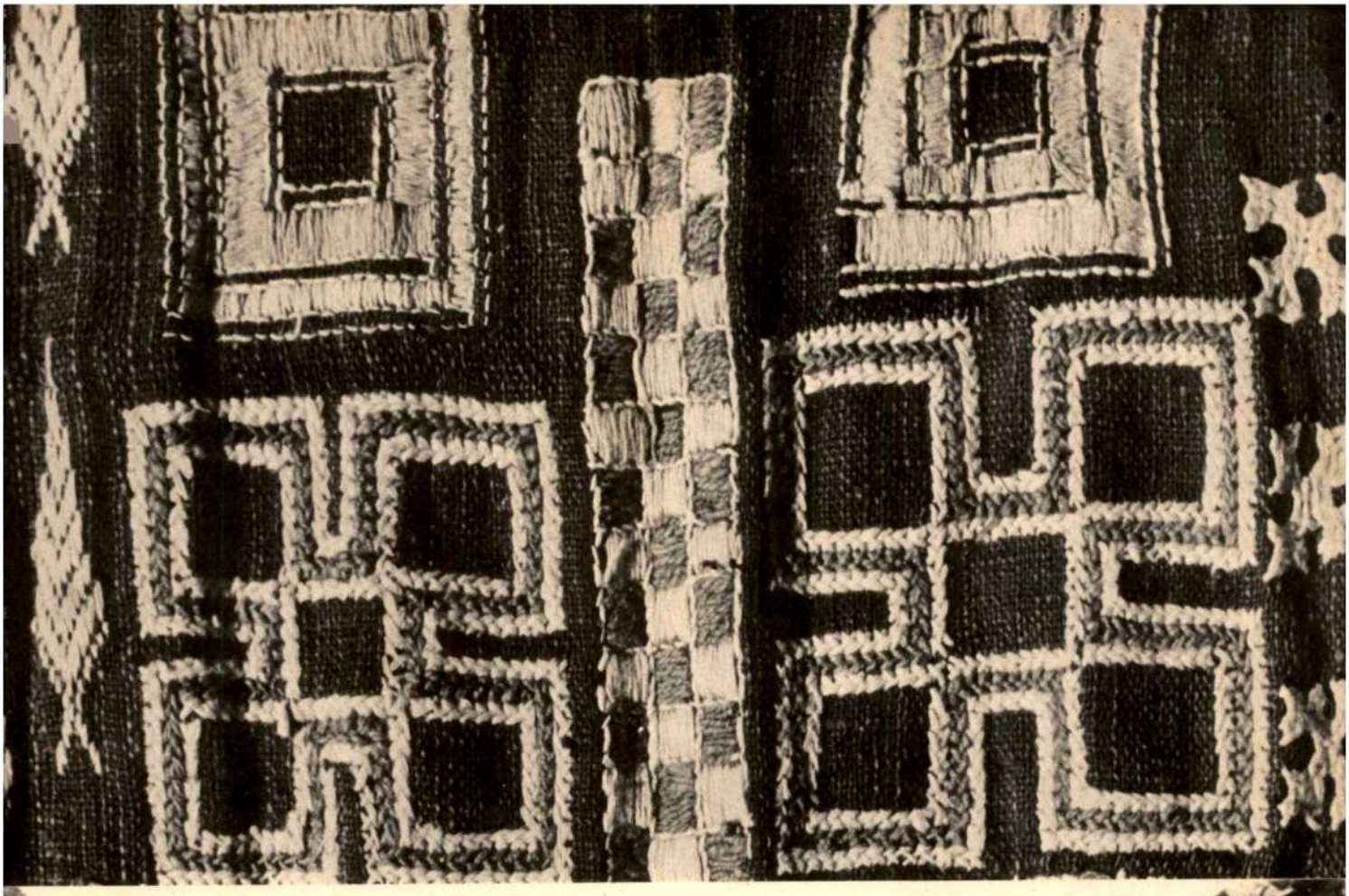
The springing line, the nervous stitch, the cloud-like bouquet of flowers, in rainbow colours, were all conceived as gay little sparks flowering into the warm sensuous presence of a bride.

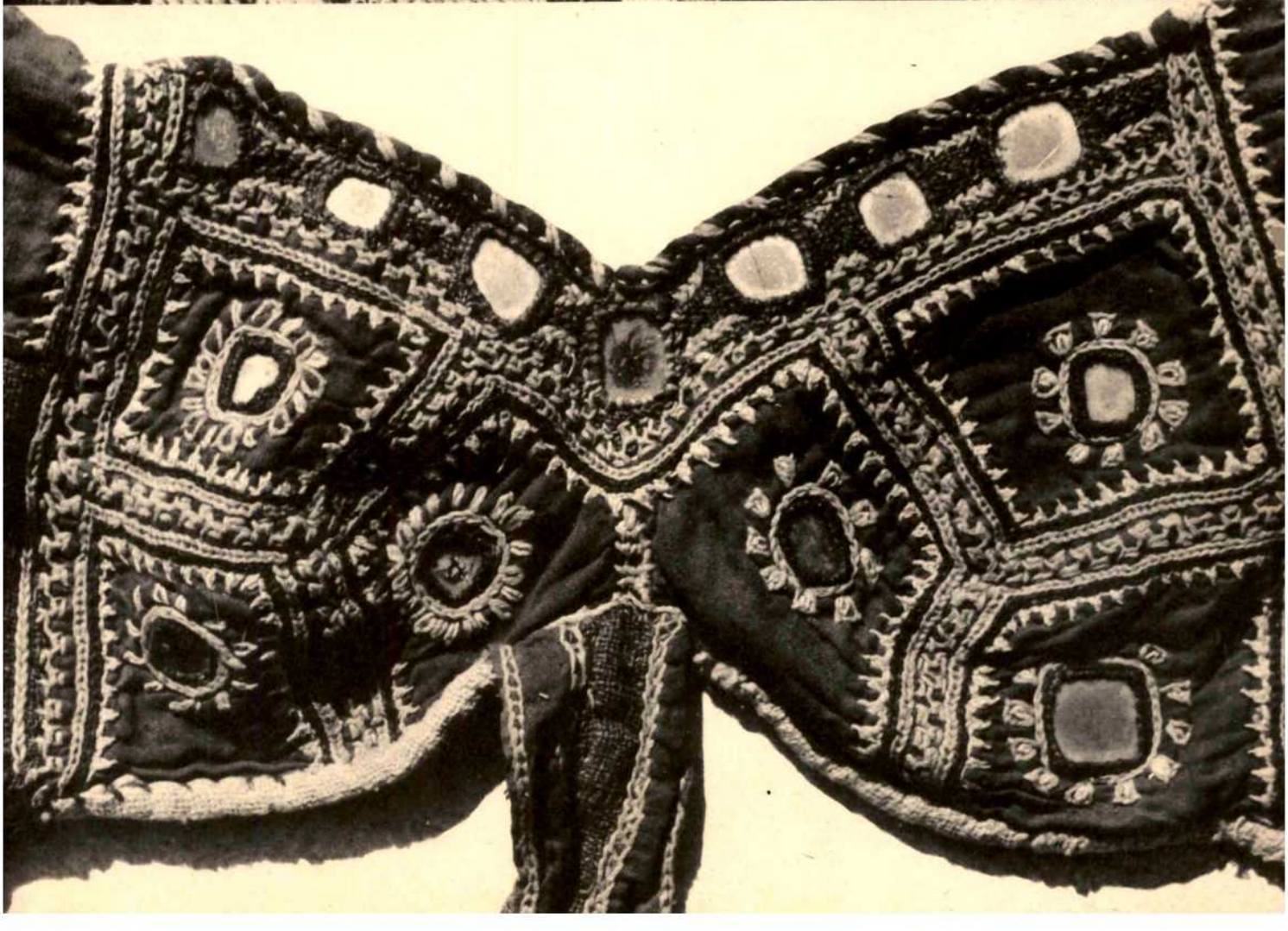
Embroidery is thus not so much a decorative pattern of mechanical assemblage of forms, it is the animation of cloth for happiness.



26 The detail of a border of a skirt in a more sumptuous but rougher idiom shows grasp of animal, bird and human forms. *(p. 23)*
27 The live motifs and forms embroidered in a Phulkari shows mastery of design and sensitivity. (Courtesy: Ram Dhamija).
28 The sensuous excitement created by mirrors on the choli for the breasts shows pagan impulses.







Jewellery

In the finds of the pre-historic periods in Haryana we find beads, bangles, amulets and seals.

In Maharashtra there is mention of the jewellery worn by Damayanti, the beloved of Nala, specially the *karan phool*. Presumably, by this time, the life of the forest had already led to the making of *venis* (little garlands for the bun of the hair) of motia and molsari flowers. The garlands for the brides were also of flowers, marigolds being preferred by the poor, and lilies by the rich.

These embellishments of the person specially of a woman became models for the silver and gold jewellery that began to be made in the times when metals came into use.

As the goldsmiths are mentioned in the epics, the intricate techniques of smeltering precious metals, beating them into shape, cutting them into minute pieces, welding, engraving with minute precious stones, had already been perfected by then.

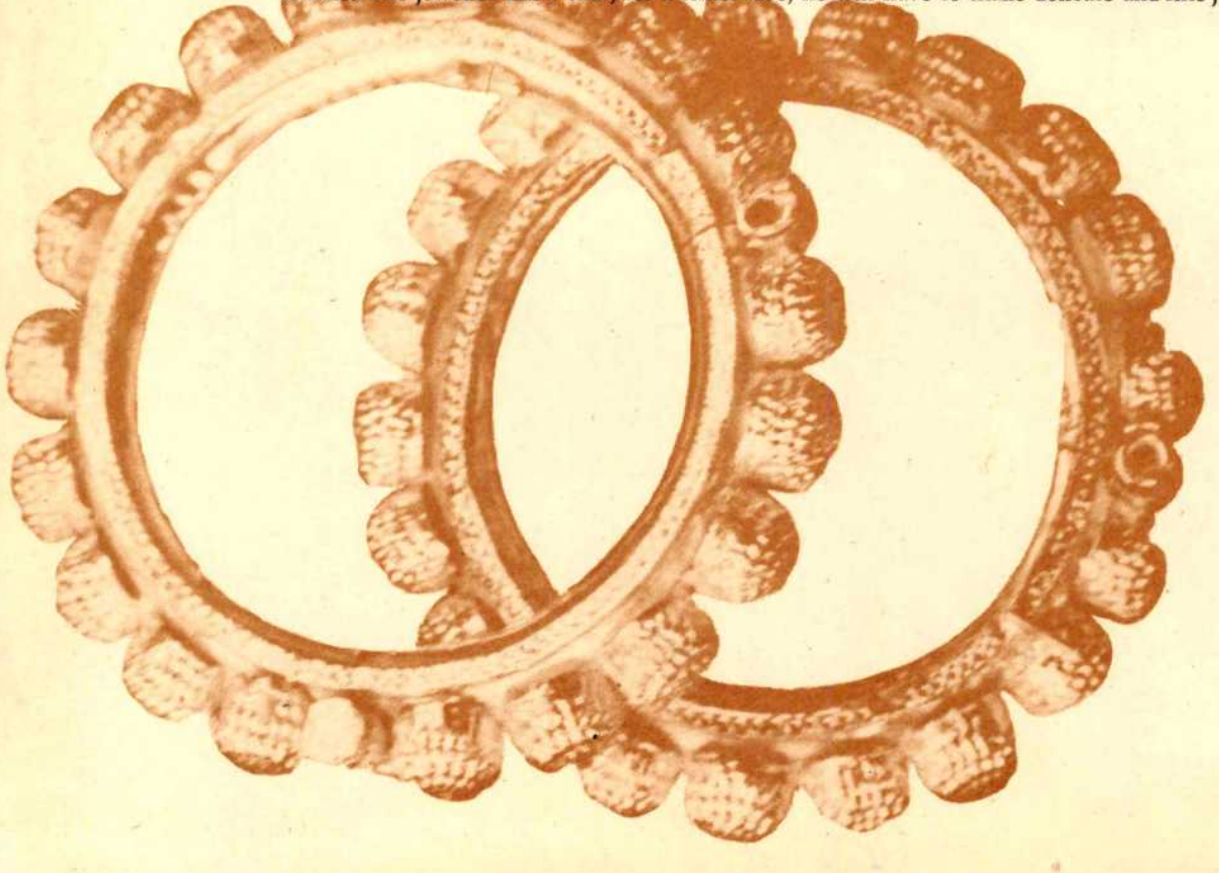
The floral forms, for the ears, the nose, the forehead and the hair, as well as for the neck, the wrists, the fingers, the waist, the ankles and toes had all been elaborated.

As money was not in much use in the barter society, jewellery in precious metals was the only investment and a woman's body was a kind of bank. In times of need the head of the family would take off a piece and pawn it to the moneylender to tide over the crisis.

Thus there came to be a silversmith in every village.

The traditional jewellery of Haryana owes much to the Central Asian designs which percolated into this part of the country, with nomadic and aggressive infiltrations.

But the Hindus had worked out very important considerations for *Sringar*, or the toilet preparations of the female. The jeweller knew that, for a small face, he will have to make delicate and fine jewellery, so as not to



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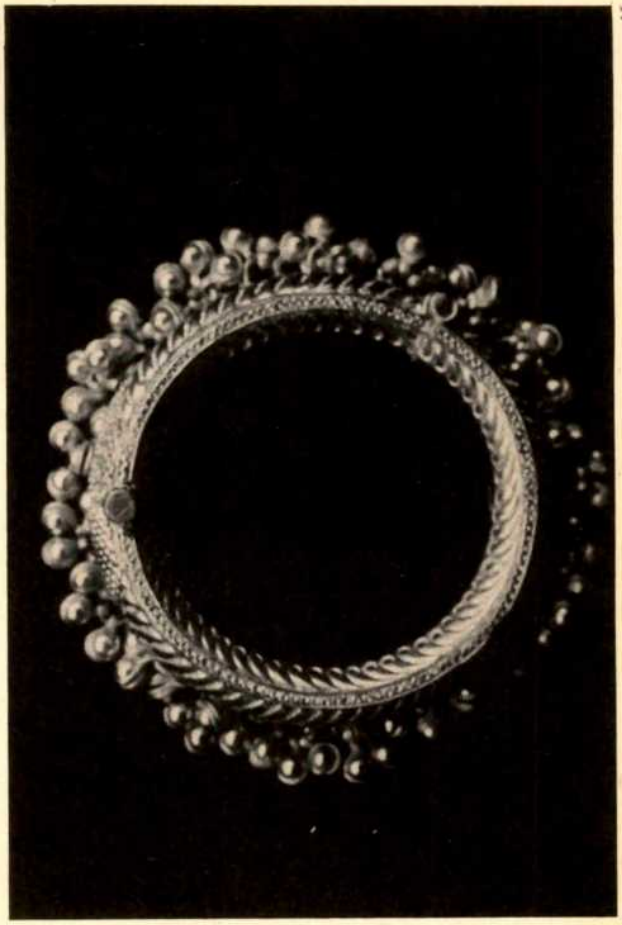
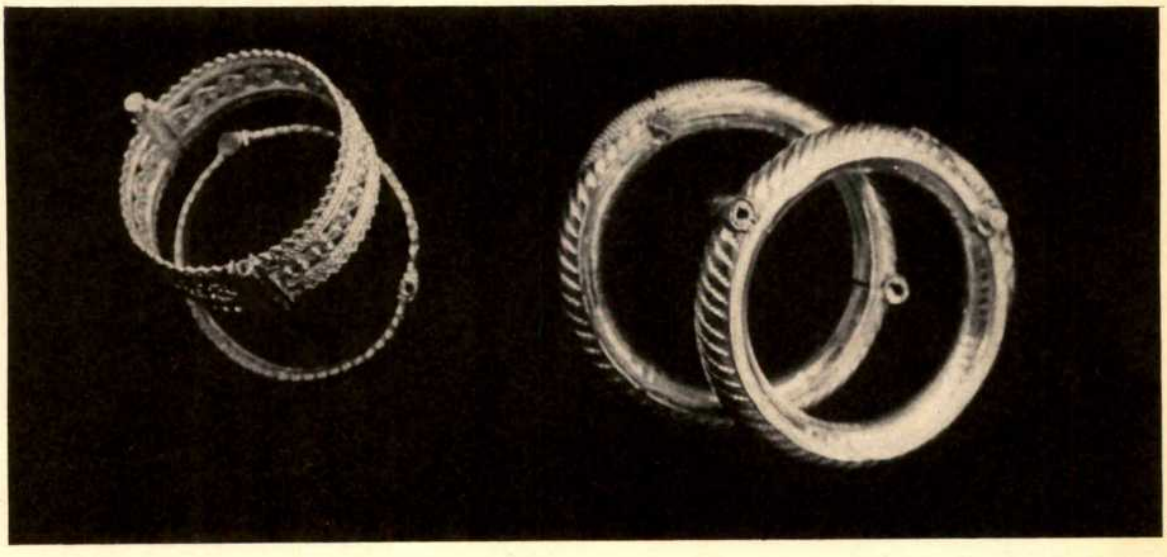


The six layers of chains of this necklace shows simplification probably due to a bare landscape. The workmanship indicates care for detail and fine finish. This necklace is more intricate in design and may be from a less bare area.

The designs of the bangles shares with other parts of the north the love for heavy kara and impressive beading richness of material.

The oval face of this Haryana beauty has been heightened only by the three strings of the Kavitri from the hair under the dupatta. The nosering is simple and there is only one necklace of silver round the neck. The loveliness of the contours is thus only heightened by the jewellery and not marred.



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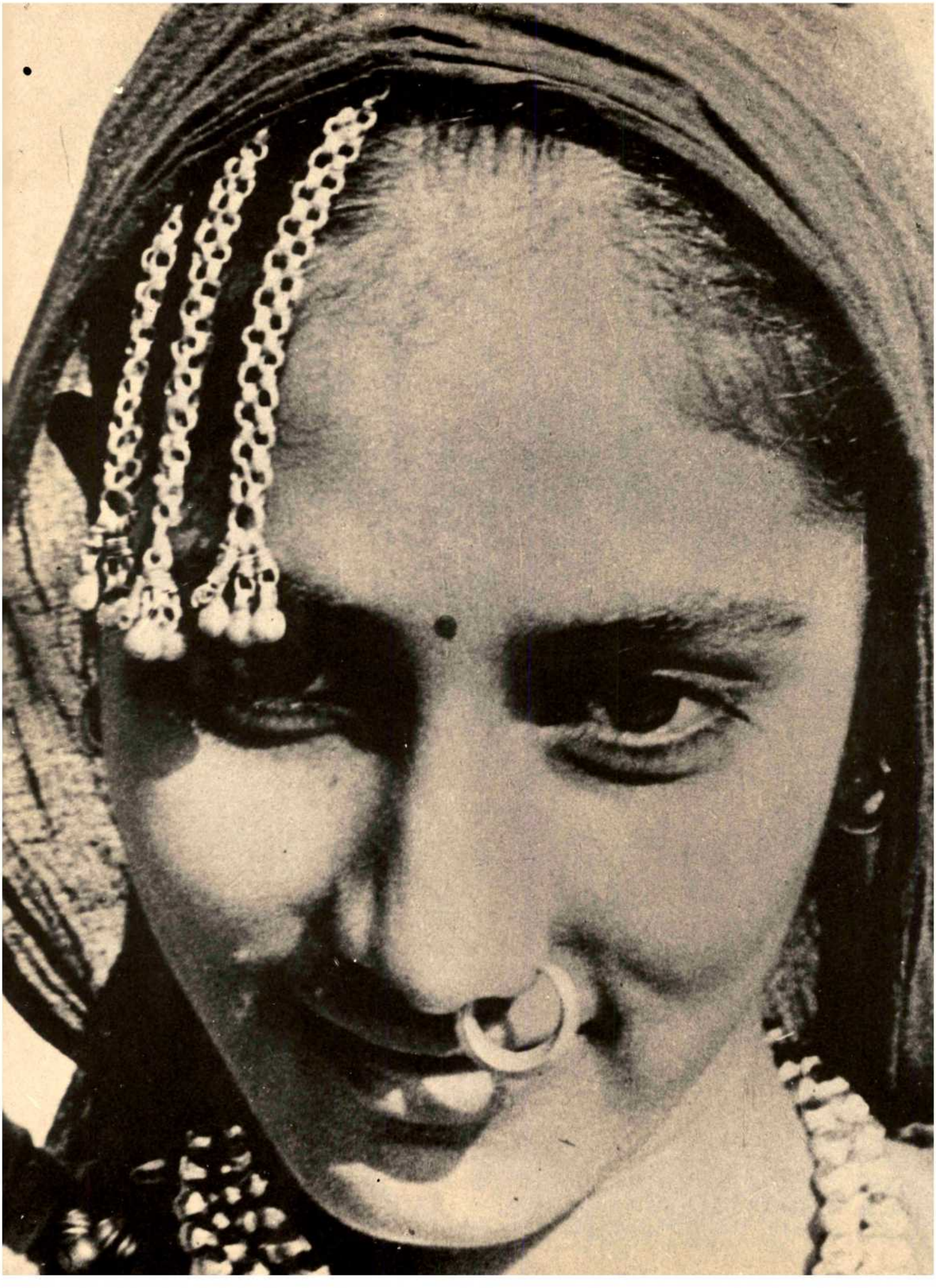
overweigh the features. And he was well aware of the methods of persuading a woman with a heavy jaw to tone down the flesh with larger ear jewellery and even heavier pieces for the forehead and a bigger nose ring. The size of a piece was, therefore, thought out, in terms of the individual person to be adorned.

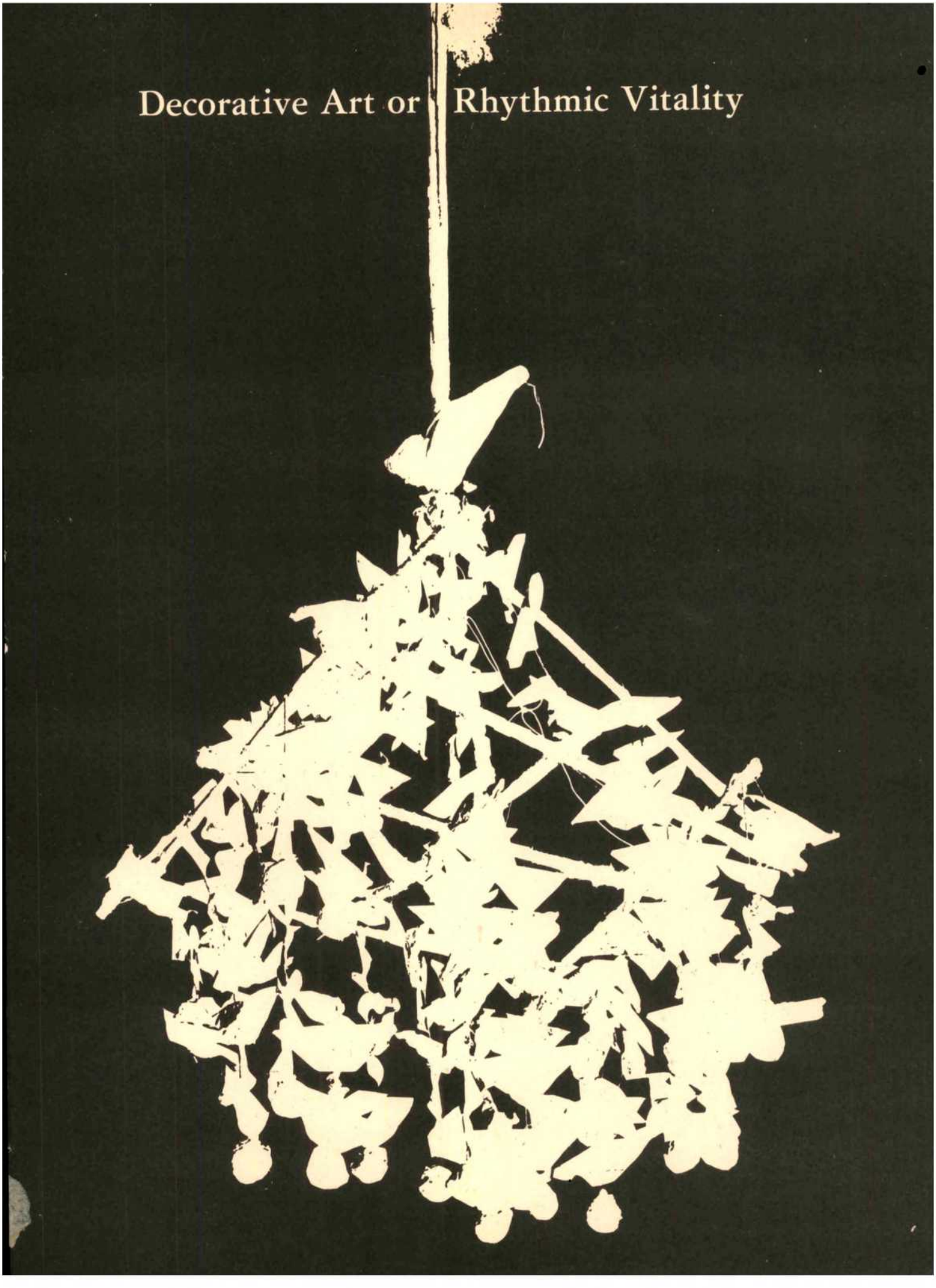
The range of jewellery depended upon the status of the women in feudal society.

But there has been no woman, except a widow, who did not wear jewellery.

And there was no auspicious marriage in which the bride was not given jewellery in the dowry.



Decorative Art or Rhythmic Vitality



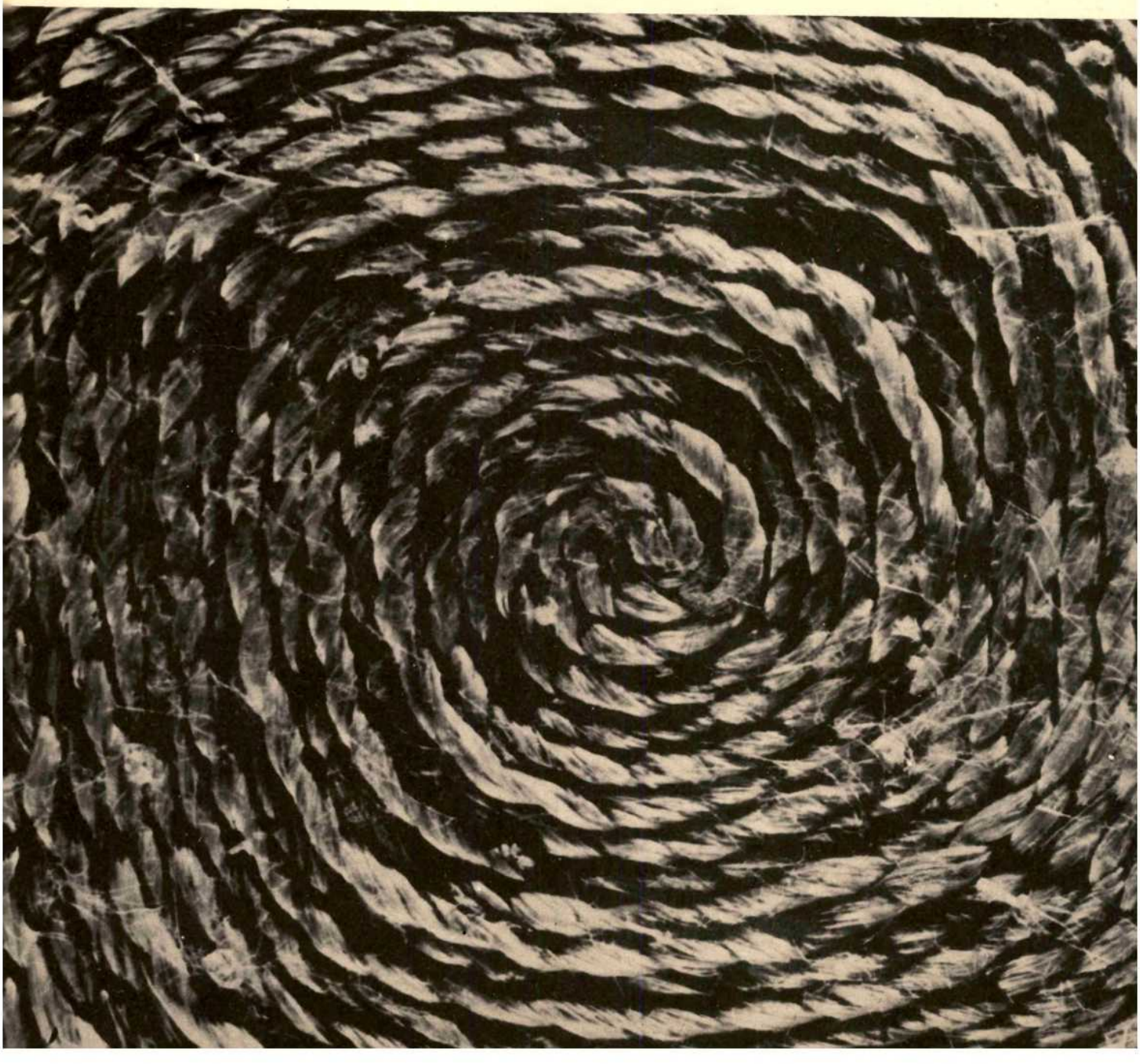
One of the chief characteristics of folk culture is that it emerges from human needs and interests. The skill of the craftsmen expresses itself through the kinetic rhythm of the hands, in making a functional object, rather than in the elaboration of decorations for vanity, as in the court art. Therefore, the creative process is sustained at a level of rhythmic vitality. And the rhetoric, pompousness, grandiosity and artificiality of art is obviated.

The aesthetic of folk forms is in the integrity of the simple, unostentatious and fundamental forms.

The paper birds mobile is an artefact which is made mainly for the marriage ceremony in Haryana. The assemble of bird forms on the bamboo scaffolding, in suspension, distinct from each other and yet together, as on a tree, is supposed to echo the chorus of birdsongs which may announce the coming of happiness.

The composition gains its effect as in Indian music, by the repetition of notes. The rhythm of the mobile forms is suggested by the contrasted sharp angles and the festoons of round fruits.

The fantasy of the paper toy-maker has here elaborated the beginning of a colourful life, through the use of many coloured paper to celebrate the inauguration of a happy married life.



Another form of auspiciousness is the model house, which used to be made, almost in every village barn, for the Deepavali festival of lights. The oil saucer lamps of clay were to light the way for the Goddess Laxmi when she was supposed to come during the night, to bless the house and augment the family fortunes.

In village society every girl was trained early to prepare the clay mixture of soft earth, and husk and resin, so that when she grew up she may help in making the big house. The design of the model Deepavali house, with its open veranda, and the two upper storeys, takes note of the need for air. The architecture is elevated on top, symbolically, by a kind of triangular *sikhara*, because the house is to be lived in by the Goddess.

The sewing box of cane and straw and cloth festoons is also ingeniously conceived. It was generally part of a dowry.

The symbolical bird's nest is on the top storey. The festoons stand for fruit. The geometrical design of the straw weave is to ensure strength for the fragile object to last a lifetime.

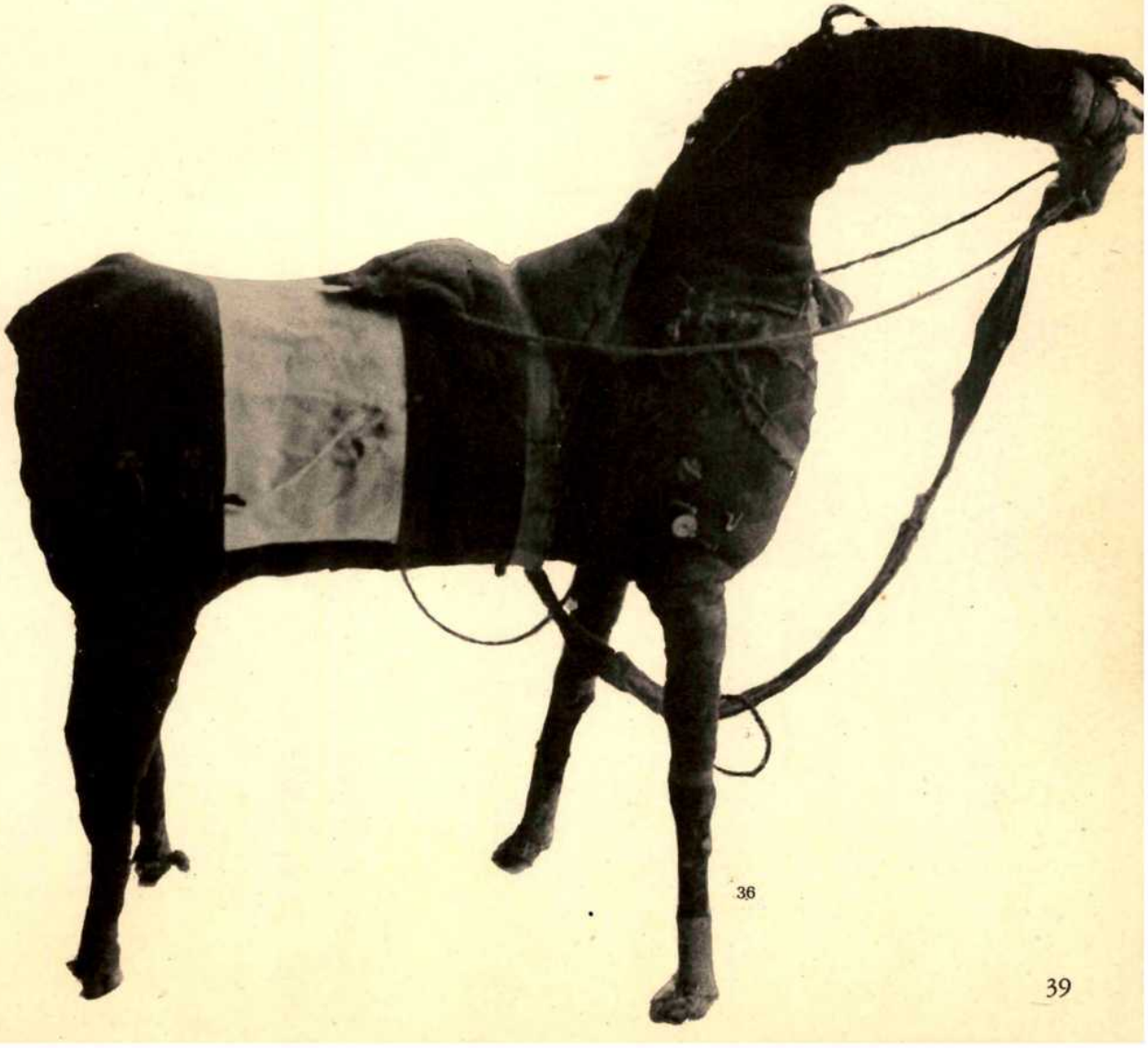
The house with the birds poised on the top, was invariably the abstract symbol of the lovely home to which the bride would go.

35

The elaboration of such a form, by putting together basic structures, on a two dimensional plane, is a primitivist idea, which avoids the complications of realism and achieves an integral form.

The *toran*, or door decoration, with the camel form in glass beads, on the rough texture of woven cloth, is also a symbolical of the wish for plenty.

ıe paper birds mobile is ıde mainly for the mar-ge ceremony in Haryana. ɔe texture of the straw ıt used for sitting on the ıor in the kitchen is an ıvention of the folk by e adaptation of the spiral inciple. The love of cir-lar forms is dominant. ıe cobra-like bugle form rhaps originated with e Naga cults of South ıryana. ɔe vital symbolical horse ıde of cloth.



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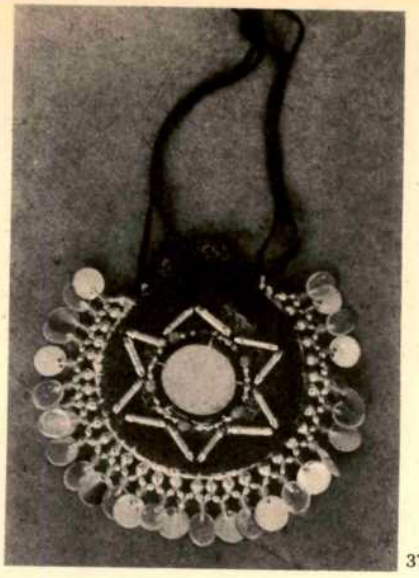
37 *A decorative semi-circular form with studded mirror in the centre.*
38 *The straw basket which is used as a jewel box or for thread and needle.*
39 *The deepavali house with two storeys.*
40 *Decorative form in wood.*
41 *Fan with lacquer painted handle.*



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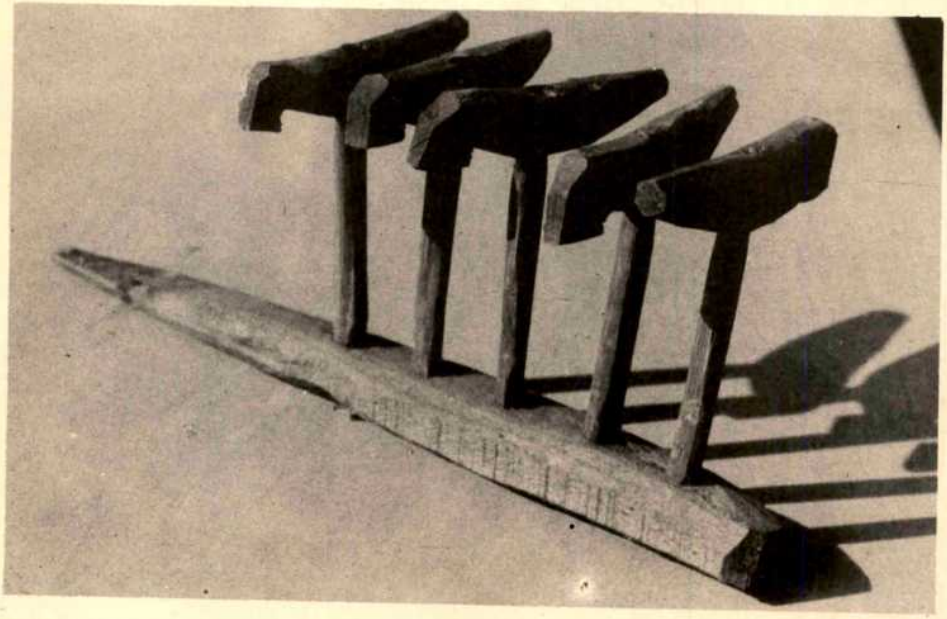

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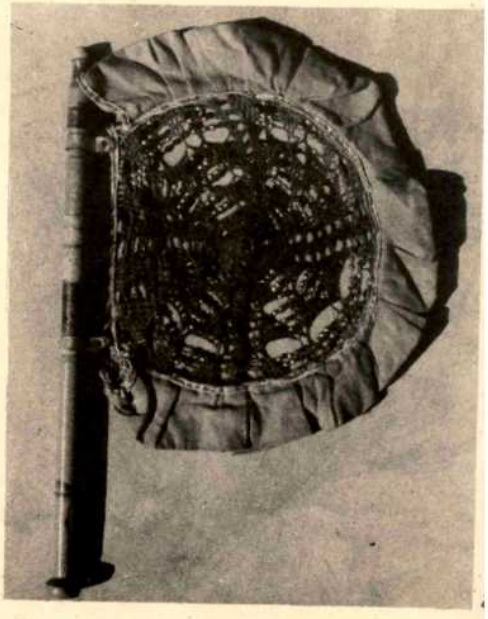
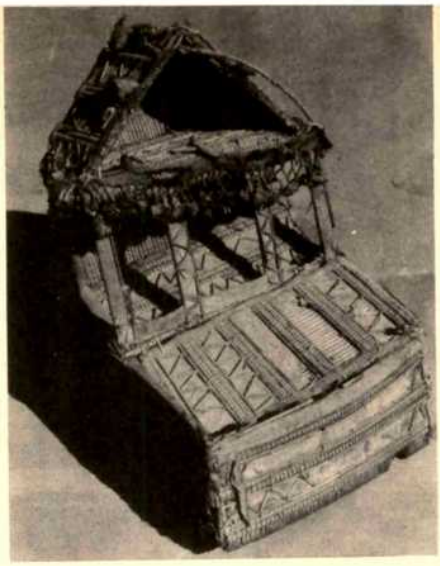


42 *The sewing box of cane and straw with cloth festoons.*
43 *Phulkari clad young bride decorating her childhood companion.*
44 *The toran or door decoration with the camel form in glass beads.*
45 *The painted decorative pitcher ready for the festival.*



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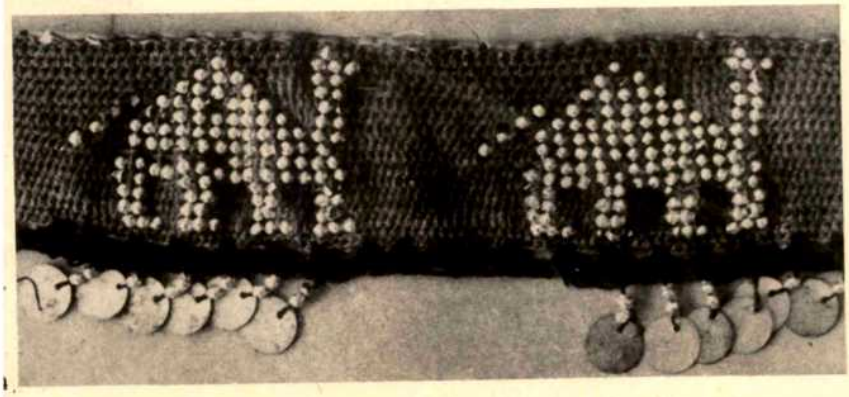

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The adumbration of peacock feathers on to a *papier mache* mask structure, is a unique fantasy common to the folk in many parts of our country. The rainbow colours of the peacock feathers always appeal to the people. And the assemblage of these into fans was frequent everywhere.

In Haryana the abundance of peacocks has been interpreted as the energy for plentiful blessings given by the Gods.

The peacock fan is also part of a dowry.

The basket making with straw has been an essential part of Haryana village culture. The bride was given most of the trosseau in such baskets, covered against dust and insects, to preserve precious things.

Almost every peasant girl knew how to make these wonderful forms with the simplest materials, weaving abstract designs on the surface with imaginative skill.

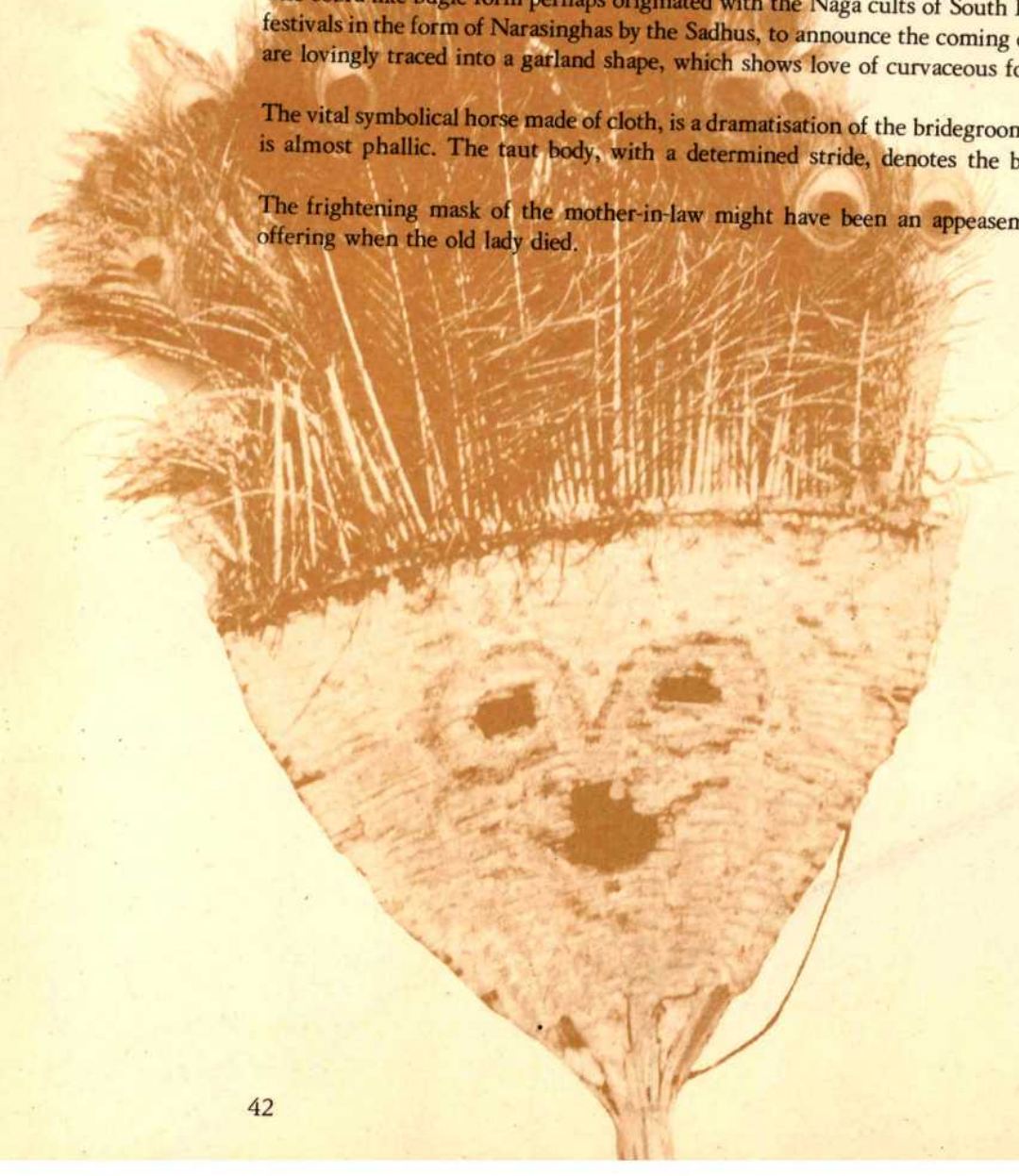
The making of musical instruments, such as the *sarangi* matured from the *ektar* instrument of Narad, son of the Supreme God to the many-stringed, shapely container of subtle sounds.

The sarangi was an invention of the 13th century poet, Amir Khusrau, mainly to express devotional music. The instrument became popular with the bards of Haryana.

The cobra-like bugle form perhaps originated with the Naga cults of South Haryana. It came to be used at the festivals in the form of Narasinghas by the Sadhus, to announce the coming of the gods. The evils of the bugle are lovingly traced into a garland shape, which shows love of curvaceous forms.

The vital symbolical horse made of cloth, is a dramatisation of the bridegroom's *vahan*. The aggressive snozzle is almost phallic. The taut body, with a determined stride, denotes the bridegroom himself.

The frightening mask of the mother-in-law might have been an appeasement sculpture given as a finery offering when the old lady died.



Leather Work

The curing of hides and skins of dead animals was an age old profession of the outcastes in the traditional society.

The making of the goat skin water carrier was a primary need in the villages, where water had to be fetched from the solitary stream, or well, far away. The large leather bucket to lift water from the well, by rope gyrating on the wheel, and pulled by the bullocks downhill, was another basic requirement.

The earlier peoples of India went unshod on bare feet. The wooden sandals were used by the upper hierarchy of Brahmins for purity. The Roman and Greek settlers in the north-west after Alexander's invasion brought the leather chappal. The Central Asians, from the Kushans downwards, introduced a variety of footwear. The design of the Indian shoe, however, with its embroidery in silk and gold and silver thread developed in the medieval period, under Pathan and Mughal patronage.

The saddle for the horse, the chabuk for hunter, and the head piece for the bit, was a necessity of the armies which employed leather craftsmen for generations, as also the harness for the horse yoked to the *yakka*, the tonga and other carriages in the late medieval period.

The ingenuity, the skill and the fine taste of the leather workers of Haryana is highly distinguished. The styles of footwear have depended on the changing patronage.

The influences of Rajasthan and Punjab, have always affected Haryana.

The coming of the machine-made shoes threatens to obliterate this craft. This is a challenge for the modern designer.

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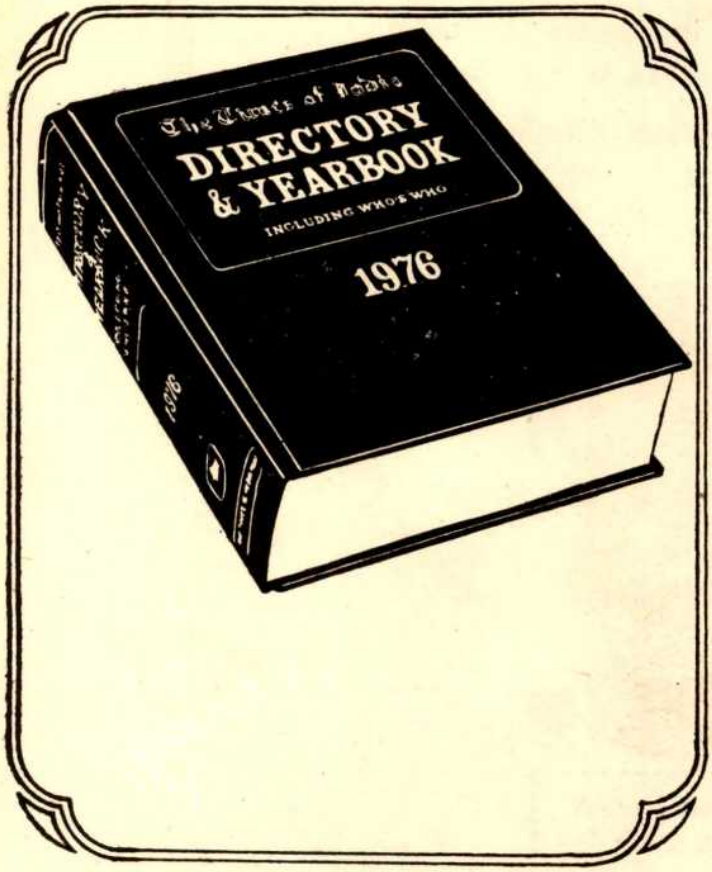

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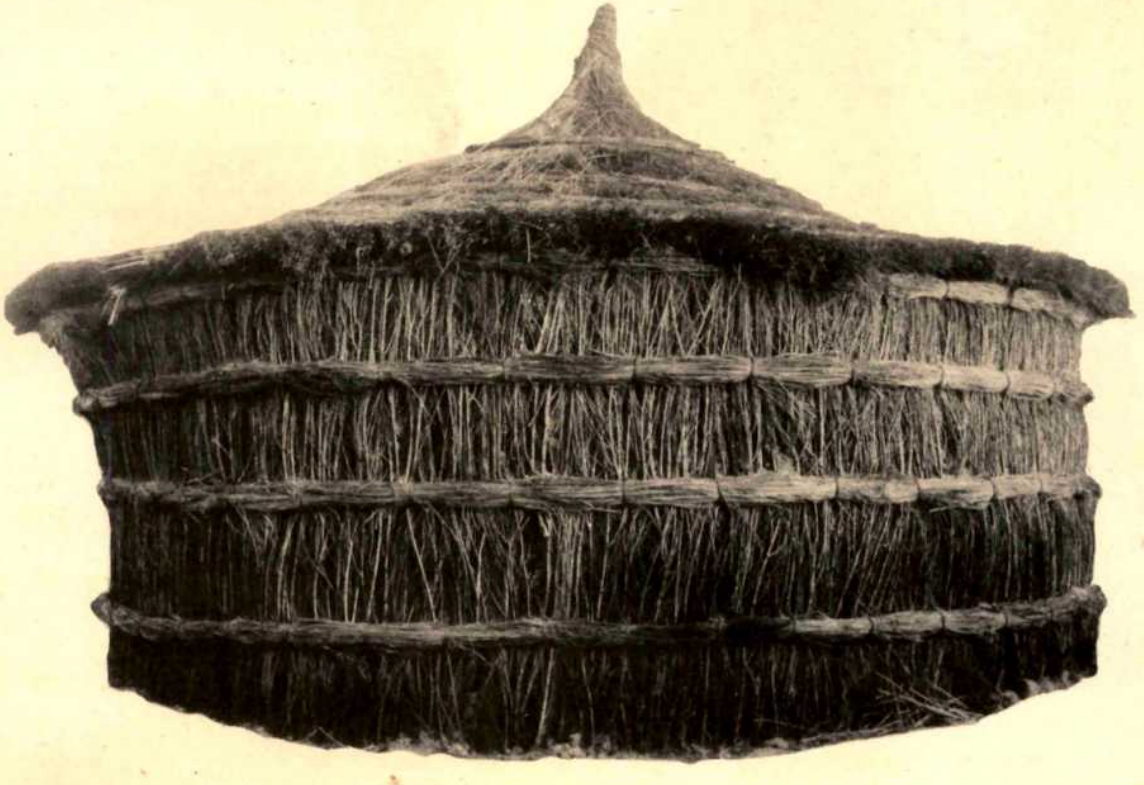

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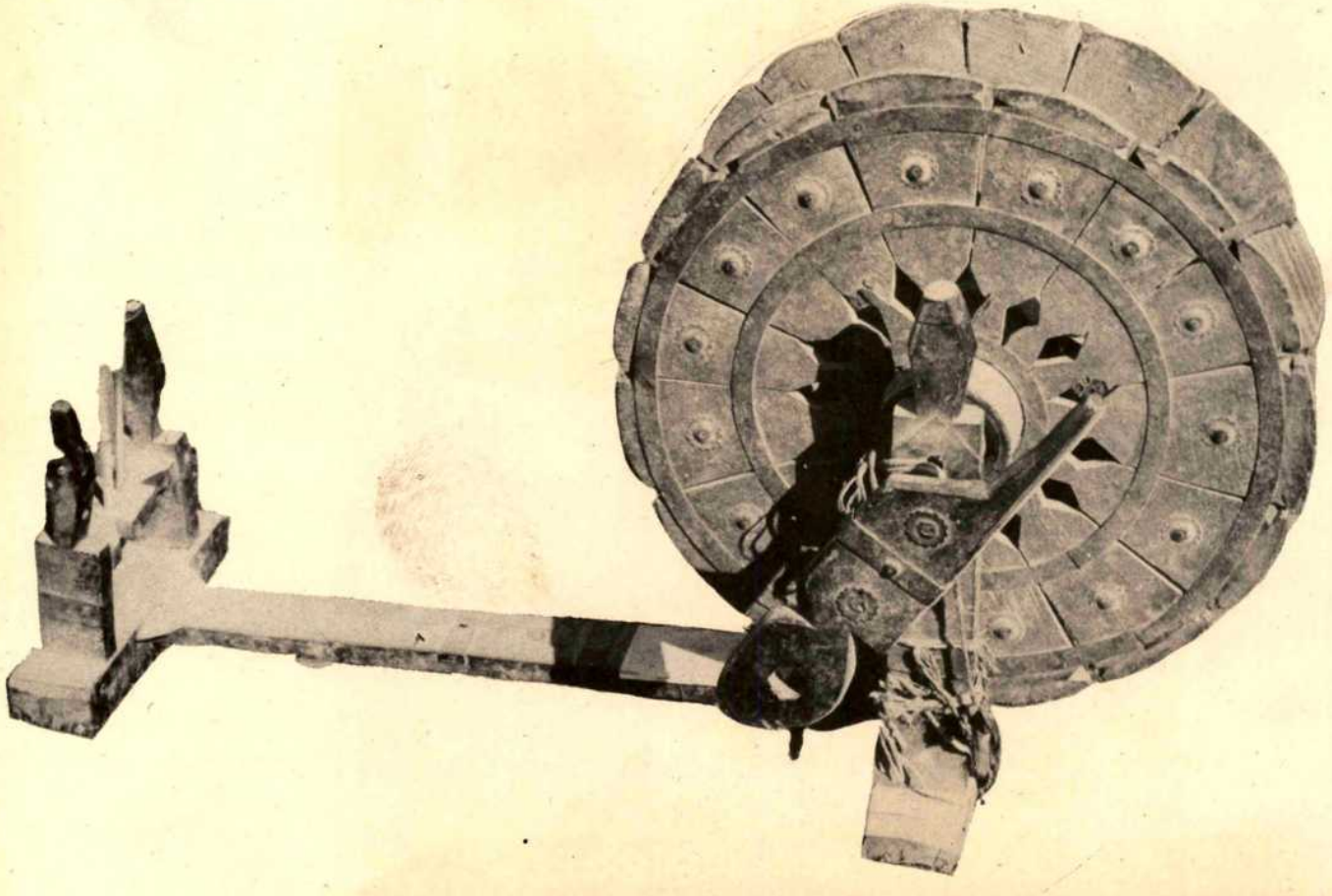

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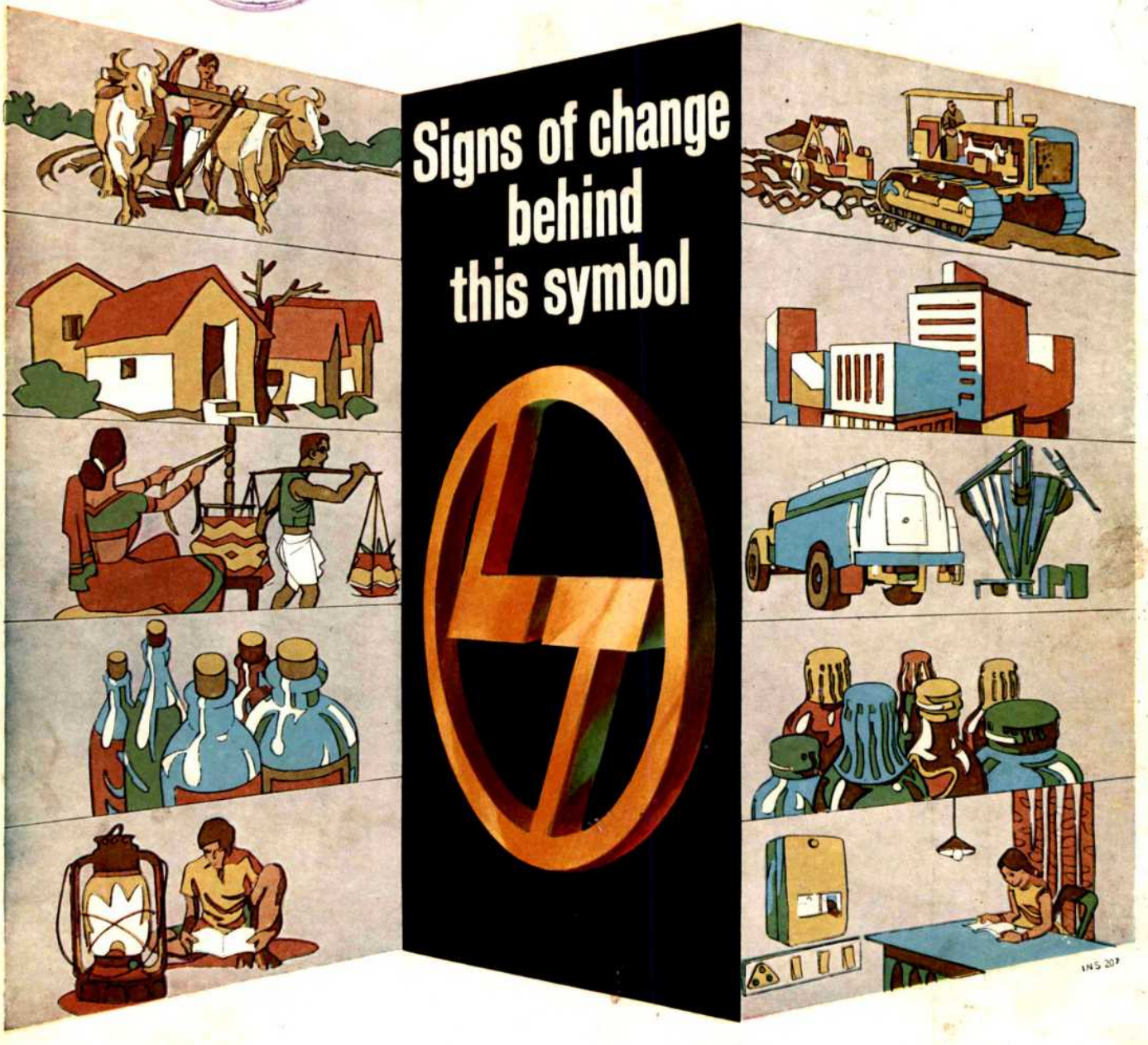

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